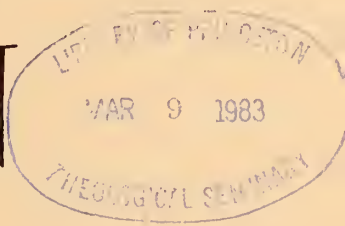


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PRINCETON  
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BULLETIN



Commencement in Gothic 1980

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James I. McCord

The Freedom of God in the Light of the Gospel

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VOLUME III, NUMBER 2

NEW SERIES 1981

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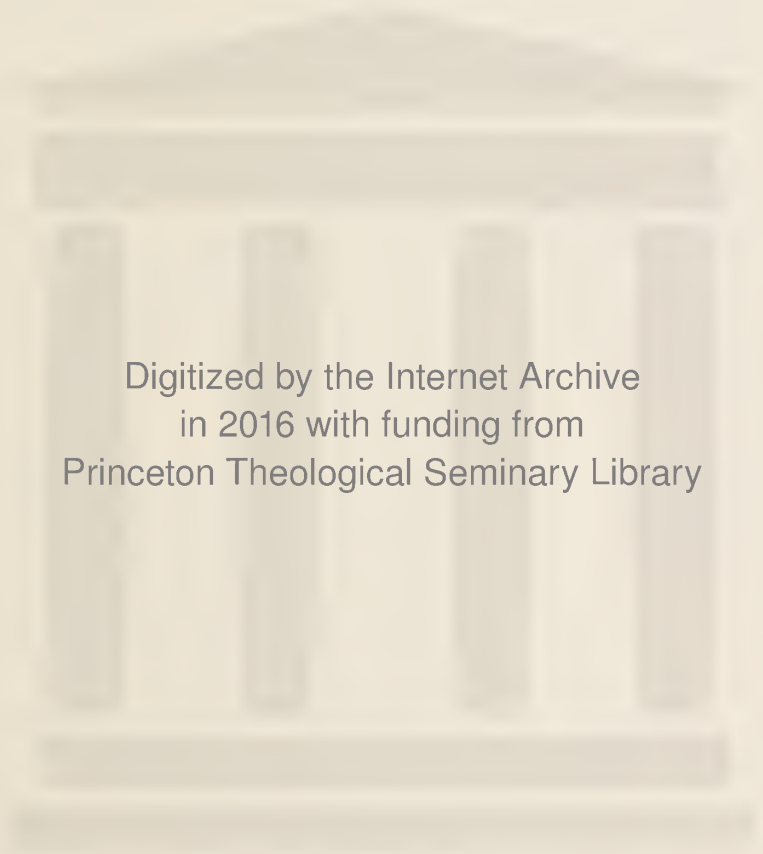
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# The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

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NEW SERIES 1981

NUMBER 2

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# Commencement in Gothic 1980

by ELMER G. HOMRIGHAUSEN

*For thirty-two years, the Rev. Elmer G. Homrighausen served on the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary: first as Thomas Synott Professor of Christian Education (1938-1954) and later as Charles R. Erdman Professor of Pastoral Theology (1954-1970). A native of Iowa, Dr. Homrighausen is an alumnus of Mission House Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the University of Dubuque. He held pastorates in Illinois and Indiana, did graduate work at the University of Chicago and the University of Geneva. Author, churchman, educator, world traveller, Dr. Homrighausen served also as Dean of Princeton Seminary, 1955-1965.*

## Commencement Address 1980

WHEN I was invited to give the address today I was surprised as was Sarah years ago when told she was to become a mother when she was past the age for such a prospect. Being in retirement and no longer in active seminary education, my first response was to laugh. And I did. So you will understand why I am honored and humbled by the invitation to address the class of 1980 in this impressive neo-Gothic house of God.

Let me dismiss from your minds the thought that I will say something profound or new about theological education gained from my long association with Princeton Seminary. In this area there seems to be "nothing new under the sun." Nor will I attempt to provide you a way to get it all together after completing all your courses under the direction of so many different but able masters. Rather, I hope to awaken you to what we are doing here during this precious time and in this significant place. And I trust my remarks may be relevant to you as you end a stage in your pilgrimage and commence another.

The topic of my address is: COMMENCEMENT IN GOTHIC 1980.

### I

Commencement? Gothic? These two words sound archaic; they are like survivals of a past with little meaning for our time. Commencement? The very term presupposes an adequate preparation for ministry. It is related to medieval society. Indeed, it has deeper roots in the rites of passage by which societies recognize the movement from one stage of life to the commencement of another. In medieval feudal society a youth passed from page to squire to knight over two seven-year periods. After proper tests, a religious ceremony and a dubbing rite, he was admitted to the status of knighthood and the world of chivalry. A similar procedure obtained for those who entered the arts and the crafts. In higher education the student read texts, attended lectures and, after proper testing of his knowledge and ability to "dispute," was admitted to the status of master, and later of doctor.

The first Commencement in North America was held at Harvard on the second Tuesday of August in 1642. The ceremony was attended by the governor, executive officials, ministers and other "men" (sic?) of note. In procession the assembly moved from Harvard Hall to the old Congregational Church at Cambridge. After a "short" prayer by the president, a member of the graduating class delivered a salutatory oration in Latin, followed by Latin and Greek orations and declamations, and a Hebrew analysis—grammatical, logical and rhetorical—of the Psalms, and the answering and disputing of ethical and metaphysical questions. So nine candidates were granted the A.B. degree. There followed a dinner, and the conferring of degrees on the Masters. Commencement Day was accompanied by rejoicing and festivities, which often went to excess. And so the rite with additions spread to Yale, to Princeton, and elsewhere.

Commencements marked the time when a prescribed curriculum had been taught, hopefully mastered and proven so by examinations, and the student was granted a *degree* as he moved from the status of learner to practitioner.

This was the kind of liberal arts education which I and many in this assembly received. The curriculum was determined by the masters, and I was required to take all the prescribed courses. Commencement was the end of liberal arts education, and the beginning of professional studies or a working career.

When I was graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1924, the same procedure obtained in theological education. Ninety-six semester hours

were required over three years, to include seven to eleven electives. Among the required courses were the Greek and Hebrew languages, Biblical exegesis, history, literature; Church History I, II, III; Theology I, II, III, including Apologetics, a defense of the Reformed system of faith; Pastoral Care, Homiletics and Polity, and a recent addition, Elocution. The studies were arranged in logical sequence. After a successful passing of examinations we had completed our theological education, and were ready to commence our ministry.

Only one full-tenured professor, eleven in all, taught each of the fields. Only a few assistants were employed. The full professors were approved by the General Assembly, and before assuming their chairs signed their names in the book which bound them to teach the Reformed system of faith without insinuation or shadow of doubt.

The only administrators in the year 1923/24 were the Registrar, who was also Secretary of the Faculty, a treasurer, a librarian and assistant librarian. The President was not listed among the administrators, but as a faculty member and professor of the history of religion and missions.

The original Plan or Design of theological education adopted by the General Assembly was "to form men for the Gospel ministry who shall be able to propagate and defend the integrity, simplicity, and fulness of that system of religious faith and practice which is set forth in the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, Plan of Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church and thus to perpetuate and extend the influence of true piety and Gospel or-

der, able and faithful ministers . . . workmen that need not be ashamed being qualified to divide the word of truth."

When we celebrated our Commencement we were equipped and ready to be dubbed as knights of the Lord by Presbyterian authority, to commence our gallant service for God and man. Little did we realize that our vocational and personal identity and equipment would be tested and matured so painfully in our post-seminary education.

## II

Does this mean we ought to scrap Commencement? Not at all! There is a *time* and a *place* for such a ceremony in the education of men and women for ministries among the people of God.

This Commencement is a unique *time* and *occasion* which will never be repeated! It has a once-for-allness about it.

It is a pause—or blick—in which we become aware of what is concluding and what is commencing here.

It is a time to celebrate; a time to remember with gratitude the years spent on the Seminary campus with its rich resources of knowledge and skills, its unusual cultural values, its competent scholars, and its ecumenical community of friends. It is a time to stop in life's pilgrimage to become aware of the profound meanings of life that may be packed into an occasion such as this, to be recalled on occasion in the years ahead with gratitude.

It is a time to think of education as a lifelong process. There is no finality in any stage of our education. No achievement in theological education

can be neatly packaged in a curriculum, validated by a theological degree, and finally celebrated in a Commencement ceremony.

While the word Commencement is not found in the Scriptures, its meaning is of the essence of Biblical faith. Always the emphasis in the Great Story is on what is to be. The people of God are on exodus from the old into the new. Because of this futuristic thrust and pull, everything that has gone on before is prelude to the continuing commencements of life. Indeed, the Eternal is no static being; God will be who God will be. It is not only a matter of re-doing and restoring the past, but of fulfilling it. We are to do our own theological building in our own time and situation. Commencement is a kind of paradigm of the divine-human educational process. We live and work on the becoming edge of creativity, where the old and the new, the end and the beginning, interact.

So as the disciples were all in one place, at an end and a beginning, and were engaged in creative waiting, it may be that even here fresh revelations of the Holy Spirit will communicate something to you which will illuminate your identity and vocation, spark some new motivation for your ministry, and infill you with some warm and soul-shaking experience which will make you a more intelligent and passionate witness to the Gospel.

## III

And what about the Gothic?

It is indeed a privilege to hold our Commencement exercises in this chapel through the friendly offices of the Uni-

versity. Few seminarians enjoy a Commencement in Gothic! And yet, what has a neo-Gothic chapel to do with theological education and ministry?

Only the medieval age of faith could have produced the Gothic. It was a dramatic composition that expressed in artistic form a community's faith. The Gothic cathedral has been called "a theatre of Gothic liturgy." As Thomas Aquinas brought all of the tenets of faith together in his time into a sanctuary of verbal construction, so the cathedral embodied his *summa* in visible architectural form.

The cathedral builders did in stone what Augustine did in words in *The City of God*.

Whole communities worked together over generations to build the cathedral. They competed against each other to see whose building was the largest, highest and most beautiful. The cathedral was located in the center of the town or city. Its tower or towers dominated the skyline. Its bells were part of the daily round.

Everyone worked on it anonymously. The chief architect was the leader of a team. People harnessed themselves to carts as they dragged materials to sites that looked like construction camps. Artisans and craftsmen worked under one dominant purpose: to build a house of God according to the specifications of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic faith. Art, science, history, nature, dogma, and the cosmos were brought into captivity to the living God and his Son, Jesus Christ, the Savior and Lord of the world. The builders seemed to bring it all together into a sacrament in stone and glass, sculpture and painting, form and structure.

There it stood in magnificent visible reality proclaiming that the whole is greater than its parts and that the parts have little meaning when separated from the whole. The cathedral was for the medieval person at once a house of worship, a library, a school, an assembly hall, an art gallery, and a theatre.

The Gothic gives the impression of immense vitality coupled with lightness and lacey airiness. It has been called "spikily lineal and restlessly active." Not until the twentieth-century skyscraper would architecture achieve so stunning a feat.

The Gothic means the pointed arch that soars until it seems to merge into eternity, the ribbed column and the flying buttress. It is a marvel of beauty, filled with light and color, and adorned with tapestries, paintings and sculpture. Differing from the classical aim in sculpture to express beauty and physical grace, the Gothic expressed saintliness and devotion, Christian doctrine and divine mystery. Yet there was a touch of realism and grotesque humor created by the artists in some of the monsters and chimeras on buttresses and parapets.

The Christ of the Gothic was not "an image of divinity," but rather a Christ who called little children to him; he was not "the Savior on a jeweled Cross crowned and triumphant, but the God-Man with stricken form and eyes weary with pain, appealing to the emotions of the man or woman who gazed, rather than of the believer who could accept the symbol for the fact." (Short, *The House of God*.)

The Gothic cathedral had its doorway into the house of God, symbolically decorated, its shape of the cross,



its high vaulted ceiling, its crossing and transepts, its pulpit, its font, its lectern, its altar or table, its ambulatory around the apse along which there were special chapels. Windows to the east, west, north and south represented great facets of the faith. The nave and aisles were long, continuing beyond the transepts to form a spacious choir. Below the floor of the choir was the crypt which related the living to the saints who had gone on before. Transparent colored designs in stained glass windows produced a brilliant effect like the glittering of jewels.

The Gothic builders were rebels who refused to accept the limits of experience set by mundane things. Greek architecture was dominated by the horizontal line; but the dominant Gothic arch was vertical, pushing ever upward. "The arch never sleeps"; it is a source of ceaseless activity. It makes the forces of gravity that oppress human-kind to lose their power.

Between 1170 and 1270 more than five hundred French churches were built in the Gothic style. One of the greatest arose on a wheat field 54 miles southwest of Paris. The ten thousand townspeople poured all their energies and resources into the project, and an army of anonymous craftsmen brought all their skills to bear on the building of Rheims. There it stands today as the epitome of Gothic grandeur—faith translated into a soaring monument of carved stone and stained glass. Its vaulted ceiling stands at 124 feet above the floor; Princeton's chapel stands at 78 feet.

Even the outside of the Gothic spoke through its flying buttresses, its carvings, mouldings, and statues, and its

arched and circular openings. High on the arcades of the apse, the parapets of the roof, or the battlements of the towers, were figures of saints and angels, and of animals, goblins, demons, forces of the mysterious world of nature, or of the other spiritual world. Statues and gargoyles guarded the sanctuary within or threatened those outside.

The doorway led those who entered into the church's story. The three great doorways of Chartres, for instance, portray a thousand years of history and they express and symbolize the faith of the medieval Christian community which regarded the whole world as a symbol of the thought of God. Such an entrance prepared the faithful for the sensations they would experience in the spacious, stately vaults and grand perspective of the interior, in the radiant saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs of the people of God, and especially in the life, ministry, passion, death, resurrection, ascension and the living Lordship and Saviorhood of Jesus Christ in all his humility and servitude and all his majesty and glory.

What a lift it gave to the most lowly peasant to know that he had helped to build the cathedral and that his life, however miserable, was set within such a grand context!

#### IV

But Gothic today? Is it nothing more than a museum of the faith of our ancestors?

Even before the Reformation with its emphasis upon personal faith, the priesthood of believers, justification by faith, the place of the vernacular Scriptures and the proclamation of the

Word, there were critics—Franciscans, Lollards, Hussites, Waldensians, Brethren—who feared and criticized a Christianity that was wealthy, privileged, powerful and political. The Gothic was so formidable, finished, established, triumphant. It was part of the western feudal system in which church and state combined and even contested for visibility and authority. The worst that could be said about it was that it was a magnificent religious steeple over a world of poverty, injustice and violence.

The Reformation opened up a Pandora's box of plans for restructuring Christian worship, thought and life, and for rebuilding the house of God. The artistic creations of some cathedrals were rudely removed, leaving in essence only a meeting place for the preaching of the Word of God. The assembly or meeting house appeared in Europe and Britain. In North America it also doubled as a place of assembly for the community to deal with civil matters. Here Christian immigrants assembled on the frontier in homes and schoolhouses, and in movable tents like modern Israelites on exodus, to hear preaching with converting power and to join in gospel songs. The Salvation Army regarded discipleship as an enlistment in the army of the Lord, and its "Gothics" became army barracks for the restoration of troops for holy warfare.

The revolt against the Gothic resulted in a variety of responses in terms of theological systems or sanctuaries of worship. One of the strange creations was the Akron Plan in which, by means of moving partitions, one could combine a Sunday School assembly

room with a sanctuary for formal worship.

More radical criticisms against the Gothic were voiced by enlightened Christians who believed that through education and social legislation supported by the evolutionary process society would improve to such an extent that the Church would no longer be necessary. The Gothic could be changed into a social "Kingdom."

The French and the Marxist revolutions saw in the Gothic a symbol of oppression that must be destroyed before the new order could emerge. Then, when modern optimism met the brutal realities of two world wars fought largely by "Christian" countries, the opinion was born that the Gothic tower was a cupola or sanctuary above a pagan society. I remember the remark of a European Christian after World War II; he said the war had stopped too soon. It should have destroyed all churches, cathedrals and monuments of Christianity. Then, he concluded, we could have started Christianity afresh.

I recall seeing the ruins of the old Reformed Church in Frankfort. When I located the minister he told me of the shock he experienced when the church was bombed and many of his parishioners were buried in the debris. What did he do? He took his Bible and a hymn book and visited the surviving parishioners in their ruins. They listened to passages from the Bible, sang a hymn or two and prayed together. With great seriousness he said, "Now we have a *real* church."

How dramatically this was brought home to us on the campus of the Seminary when Jim Reeb, an alumnus, was martyred during the civil rights en-

counters. Upon coming to chapel the following day, I was confronted by pickets. The largest sign carried the question, "Why pray in chapel when we should march in Selma?" Out of it came a new sensitivity to the situation, leading to responsible involvement on the part of the Seminary.

You have studied the attempts of the Christian community in recent decades to renew itself and to make Christianity into something more vital than a Gothic ecclesiastical structure: house churches, communes, retreats, renewal centers, seminars, ways of developing spirituality, ecumenical councils and conferences. Some have gone so far as to become frightened remnants who await the Apocalypse. Others are concerned about survival; their watchword is, "Back to the catacombs." And still others have made the sanctuary into a private chapel, a sectarian center, or an electronic "church."

## V

But is the Gothic finished?

Prophetic minds grant that there will always be a time and a habitation for the Christian community to engage in what the early Christians did: "continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and prayers." In the history of the Christian community, buildings have been erected as expressions of the Christian faith which would be witnesses to the outside world and be habitations for the people of God to conduct their activities.

The Gothic has survived in updated forms, even though Lewis Mumford, in his study of cities, regards it as architecturally recessive and no longer

dominant. Ralph Cram, whose genius is seen everywhere in this chapel, was asked, "Is the Gothic connected with our times?" He replied, "The Gothic is a renaissance not of pagan but of Christian forms." He believed in the Gothic "reality" which embodied authentic Christianity. And although we today conceive of the Christian faith in a more prophetic, democratic, multifaceted, laicized and human way, and conceive of the Christian habitation more in terms of service than of architectural splendor, we must take seriously the Gothic "reality." As Picasso might put it, "The Gothic idea will never die." Its monumental witness to the fulness of the Gospel in form, color, symbol, glass, music, sculpture and painting must be considered in the shaping of theological structure, liturgical worship, and church buildings in the future.

I invite you to look about this chapel. There is the majestic doorway that leads into the sanctuary, with its message that he or she who enters this atmosphere of mystery and awe must enter with the proper mind. The story of the life, ministry, teachings, death, resurrection, ascension and Lordship of Jesus Christ dominates the colored glass. The eye is turned upward and the spirit is hushed in an atmosphere which is conducive to silence and prayer. The clerestory windows let the light shine through figures of the Old Testament and the masters of philosophy, theology, chivalry, poetry, law and science. On either side of the narthex one finds El-Rhasi, the Muslim doctor of medicine, and John of Damascus, the originator of liturgical song in the Eastern Church. Far to the front is the

Table, or Altar, on which is celebrated "the inmost sanctuary of our whole Christian worship." In front of the choir is the pulpit for preaching, the lectern for reading, and the font for baptism. High above the organ and choir, windows portray the great Psalms, and illustrate four epics: *The Divine Comedy*, *The Death of King Arthur*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Most impressive of all are the four great windows: the East Window of Love, dominated by the Crucified Christ, the Last Supper, and the humble human Jesus washing the disciples' feet; the West Window of the Resurrection and the Second Coming of Christ, dominated by the regal Christ in glory, who has been given all authority, whose head is surrounded by the signs of the Zodiac, and towards whom all things in this chapel and in history move; the North Martyr Window, dominated by Christ crowned with thorns, and including the figures of Stephen, Joan of Arc, St. George and Thomas à Becket (others could be added who were martyred by an assassin's bullet, an ambush, a torture chamber or a hangman's noose); and the South Window of Truth, dominated by Christ the Teacher and containing the figures of Paul, Augustine, Alcuin, Erasmus and Witherspoon (who believed that truth is involved in higher education and civil government). Immediately in front of this window is one that includes Luther, Knox, Wesley and Whitefield (who preached in Nassau Hall).

And always one is conscious that the entire structure is held together by the form of that One Person on a Cross,

witnessing with outstretched arms to the suffering love and faithful obedience of Him who is our way, truth and life.

I am sure that all of us sense that we are in an atmosphere and among symbols and figures of our faith that make us aware of the majesty and the lowliness of our Lord; of the mystery and the meaning of our faith; of the high, broad, deep and long dimensions of human life in Jesus Christ; of the sense of belonging to that great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us in the communion of saints; of the wholeness and the diversity of our faith; of the abiding essentials of faith, hope and love; of the need for a faith that is informed with wisdom and motivated by the martyr-stuff of courage.

## VI

In conclusion, whatever the shape of Commencements will yet be, it is a special time to celebrate the goodness and grace of God that have influenced and shaped us through countless means thus far in making us ready for life and ministry. It is a time to stop and reflect upon what we are finishing and what we are commencing in this pause on the strange but wonderful pilgrimage of life. And it is time to remind ourselves that Commencement is of the essence of the Christian faith. The Christian is a pilgrim embarked upon a continuing and lifelong education. Commencement is a kind of paradigm of God's way of maturing his sons and daughters in personal and professional life. And always the direction is from the past to the future.

The disciples asked Jesus when they were about to move from one stage of



life and ministry to another, "Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" His response was that he came not to restore the past but to fulfill it in the future. "Greater things than these shall you do," he promised. "You shall be my witnesses," he commanded.

Facing an uncertain situation, the disciples longed for the "good old days." They were told to forget the strong desire to find life and ministry only in what was. Jesus invited them to move from a knowledge of him in the flesh to the fuller knowledge of him in the larger dimension of the Spirit, from a concentration upon the past to the larger ministry with him in the future, from a desire to return to the parochial and provincial to the broader ecumenical dimensions of discipleship and service, and from only a personal devotion to Jesus to fellowship with the disciples and witness in the world to the end of the age. Remember Barth's affirmation on the front cover of *TIME* when he visited Princeton: the goal of human life is not death, but resurrection!

And whatever the shape of the structure or sanctuary of thought and devotion may be in the future, we are called upon to be builders in our time. As our medieval forebears expressed their faith through structures of thought, devotion, and architecture, so must—and do—we.

Incidentally, I would like to ask candidates for ordination to ministry to present not only *verbal* forms of their faith for judgment by their peers, but also drawings—and liturgies—of sanc-

tuaries which would express their faith. I wonder what such a sanctuary would look like? A meetinghouse, a museum, a tent, an ark, a cave, a catacomb, a barracks, a pagoda, a lecture hall, a temple, a hospital, a basilica, a private chapel, a television studio, or a fish?

What would its doorway require of those who enter? What pieces of furniture would it contain? What accommodations would be provided for the activities of the people of God? What arts and crafts of the human community would be honored in its structure and beautification? What figure or symbol would hold its varied and manifold parts together? What would distinguish it with an identity and a mission that embrace the fulness of the Triune God and the total human and cosmic enterprise? Would it be a house of humanity with all its imperfection, ignorance and rebelliousness, in which the grace, truth and right of Jesus Christ live and work in the power of the Spirit for the creation of the City of God?

In the years ahead when you are tempted to think that you have reached a dead end in your pilgrimage, remember this Commencement in its present and perennial meaning. And when you are tempted to be critical of the "Gothic" and to settle for some *fragment* or *section* of the Christian faith, remember the grand dimensions of the Gothic "reality." Then Commencement in Gothic on June 3, 1980, will be a sacramental memory of creative meaning and of inspiring hope. Maranatha!

# Freedom and Liberation

Farewell Remarks to the  
Graduating Class, 1980  
by the President of the Seminary

JESUS said, "You will know the truth, and truth will make you free," and St. Paul added, "For freedom Christ has set us free." At the center of the Christian faith is the experience of liberation, the reality of freedom, the basis and promise of human rights. "Freedom is the gift of Christianity," declared Nicholas Berdyaev. It did not come from the ontocratic and static cultures of the East, nor was it a product of the Greek and Roman West, where Stoic fate and Epicurean chance prevailed. No, freedom sprang forth from the Christian Evangel that in Christ we have been set free from sin and death in order to live out our days in obedience and service, and to follow the quest for truth and wholeness.

The plight of freedom has been bleak in our country, and its prospect now is not for our comfort. It has become our spiritual disease. Someone has recently observed that "the only universal thing about human rights is their universal denial." We seem to have reversed the trend of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which produced liberalizing and democratic revolutions. The revolution typical of this century is totalitarian. It claims human freedom and identity, and demands blind obedience and laborious service for anonymous and malignant powers.

Why are we, supposedly enlightened

and humane persons, afflicted with this spiritual disease? Futurologists tell us that one reason is our response to scarcity. In *AN INQUIRY INTO THE HUMAN PROSPECT*, Robert Heilbroner indicates that we can only expect more repression, more authoritarian regimes in the immediate future, because the products of the earth will grow scarcer and we shall be unable to exercise self-discipline and self-control. If discipline does not come from within, it will be imposed from without. One would like to dismiss Heilbroner and his pessimism, based on a Freudian anthropology, but our experience with the energy crisis in America today will not permit it. Mr. Gallup has reported that most of us do not believe the crisis is real, and my fear is that we shall continue with this illusion until Caesar is forced to act.

If one cause of this spiritual disease is the absence of self-discipline, another surely must be the conclusion that freedom is too heavy a burden to bear. This was the accusation leveled at Christ by the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevski's novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. The scene was old Seville, and the time was the sixteenth century, the period of the Inquisition, when Christ returned. The Grand Inquisitor accused him of overrating human beings, of misunderstanding their capacities. He insisted that they can not bear the burden of freedom. It is too great a weight. They want some external force to take freedom and to give them bread, to reduce them to spiritual infancy. This is the apology of every dictatorial regime.

Our narcissistic generation reminds me of a soldier in the novel, *All Quiet*

on the Western Front. When a group of nuns began to sing in the corridor outside the hospital room where the soldiers were confined, someone threw a pitcher through the door to stop the noise. An inspector was summoned, coldly eyed each soldier, and then one confessed, although he had not been the culprit. The inspector stared at him for a moment, and then turned on his heel and left the room without a word. As soon as he had cleared the door, the other soldiers turned to the one who had confessed and asked, "But why did you say you did it, when it wasn't you at all?" He responded with a laugh, "It really doesn't make any difference. A few days ago I got a lick on the head, and they gave me a certificate saying I am no longer responsible for what I do. Since then I have been having a perfectly wonderful time."

Jesus said that freedom is based on a relationship with God through Him, and that "if you continue in my word, you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." Christian freedom is not an abstraction. It is a gift of grace. It comes with the acknowledgment of God's claim over us. It is a prerequisite for responsibility and maturity. Freedom depends on our living on the Word, on a living relationship with God.

This is the conclusion of Robert Browning's moving poem, "Instans Tyrannus." It is a tale of a tyrant who

is offended by a subject and who vows he will stamp him out. The poem ends with the tyrant speaking:

So I soberly laid my last plan  
To extinguish the man.  
Round his creep-hole, with never a  
break  
Ran my fires for his sake;  
Overhead, did my thunder combine  
With my underground mine:  
Till I looked from my labour content  
To enjoy the event.

When sudden. . . how think ye, the  
end?

Did I say "without friend"?

Say rather, from marge to blue marge  
The whole sky grew his targe  
With the sun's self for visible boss,  
While an Arm ran across  
Which the earth heaved beneath like  
a breast

Where the wretch was safe prest!

Do you see? Just my vengeance complete.

The man sprang to his feet,  
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts,  
and prayed!

—So, *I* was afraid!

Go out of Princeton as apostles of freedom in the power of the Risen Christ. Do not be intimidated by any would-be Caesar. Take up the cause of the exploited, the oppressed, the alienated, and the despairing, but go in the power of Him who has conquered both sin and death and has set you free.

# The Freedom of God in the Light of the Gospel

by DANIEL L. MIGLIORE

Inaugural Address, April 9, 1980

## I

A primary principle of Christian theology, stated by Calvin at the very beginning of the *Institutes*, is that the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves are inextricably intertwined. In every understanding of God an understanding of human life is implied, and in every interpretation and form of human life an understanding of God is presupposed. This principle of correlation, as it may be called, has both fascinated and enraged philosophers and theologians. At the dawn of western philosophy, Xenophanes contended that our popular images of God are thoroughly anthropomorphic. The point was made still sharper in the 19th century by Feuerbach who held that theology is secret anthropology, and by Marx, who argued that religious beliefs merely reflect the social structures and economic interests generated by class conflict. In the 20th century it was Karl Barth above all who thundered against all talk of God which is in fact only a talking of ourselves in a loud voice. Barth spoke of the "infinite qualitative difference" between creator and creatures. He reminded church and society alike of the "wholly otherness" of God who stands in contradiction to the pious

*A native of Pittsburgh, Pa., the Rev. Daniel L. Migliore is an alumnus of Westminster College, Pa. (A.B.), Princeton Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and Princeton University (Ph.D.). Since 1962 Dr. Migliore has taught at Princeton in the Department of Theology and was named this year the first incumbent of the Arthur M. Adams professorship in Systematic Theology. He is the author of Called to Freedom (Westminster, 1980) and of many articles and reviews in Theology Today and other professional journals.*

arrogance and profound injustice of the existing human order. No serious theology today can avoid subjecting itself to the kinds of criticism represented in the work of people such as Feuerbach, Marx, and the early Barth. At the same time, as Barth's own later emphasis on the "humanity of God" makes clear, no adequate theology can fail to take up the *constructive* task set by the inescapable correlation of knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves. If it is true that every theology is continually exposed to the danger of turning God into an idol that merely reflects human alienation, it is also true that theology is a chance to see and to help shape human life in the light of the God of the Gospel. If it is true that our deformed understandings of God contribute to distorted expressions of humanity, both individually and socially, it is also true that the recovery of the meaning and reconstruction of the form of human life presupposes a continual reformation in our understanding of the ultimate power we call God.

The principle of correlation in our understanding of God and of human life has come to a new focus and has acquired a special urgency in our time. The new focus is the awakening and



struggle of poor and oppressed people for freedom. The urgency is evident in the numerous liberation causes in our society and in other parts of the world. In many lands, previously voiceless groups and peoples are declaring their right to be free. Their political bondage and marginal economic existence no longer seem to them a fate to be passively accepted but a sign of the need and task of emancipation from all heteronomous powers. The struggle for freedom is the struggle of people to determine their own lives and their future. This struggle is now a worldwide phenomenon, and the church and theology cannot ignore it. The encounter of the Christian Gospel and human culture in our generation is unmistakably focused on the question of the basis and meaning of real human freedom. What bearing does the Gospel of freedom have on the passion for freedom abroad in the world today? In recent years theology has addressed this question with unprecedented intensity, but the task is far from complete. Critical social analyses of concrete experiences of oppression are important. The proclamation of the prophetic biblical message in situations of injustice and exploitation is indispensable. The insistence that responsible theology must be praxis and not mere theory is correct. Nevertheless, if it is true that theology and the church must not allow themselves to be the ideological defense of present powers that hold human beings in bondage, it is equally true that theology and the church must not allow themselves to be drawn uncritically into the support of the latest liberation movement. In the midst of the struggle for freedom, theology has its own special contribu-

tion to make. It must seek to clarify, at the most fundamental level, the relationship between faith in the God of the Gospel and human freedom.

The word "freedom" is of course notoriously ambiguous. There is political freedom, economic freedom, and religious freedom, to mention only a few of the many different contexts in which the word is used. Indeed, some philosophers and theologians doubt that the concept of freedom can be employed at all coherently. Nevertheless, theology must not give up this word. It is deeply embedded in the Christian apprehension of God and of his purposes for his creation. It also expresses the profoundest aspirations of people for new and transformed life. The church and theology must clarify as best they can the distinctively Christian understanding of freedom instead of giving up on the word as too ambiguous or subject to ideological abuse. No theology in our time will be compelling if it fails to articulate an understanding of God as the ultimate source and criterion of authentic human freedom. This will involve critical dialogue with prevailing conceptions of human freedom. It will also involve serious rethinking of the Christian doctrine of God. That is the focus of this lecture.

I want to contend that there are at least two basic ways in which the freedom of God may be construed, as "freedom from," and as "freedom for." Abstracted from the biblical narratives, both of these approaches to God's freedom lead to distortions. The understanding of God's freedom as an abstract "freedom from" has been the controlling view in much of the theological tradition. This has both reflected and reinforced a way of thinking about

human freedom which has proved to be destructive. The way ahead in understanding both the freedom of God and true human freedom is to interpret freedom concretely in the light of the Gospel as a very particular "freedom for" which includes a very definite "freedom from."

## II

We may identify two highly influential tendencies in the understanding of the freedom of God in the theological tradition. The first is the tendency to view God's freedom as absolute and arbitrary will. This tendency is as old as religion itself. The arbitrariness and capriciousness of the divine freedom is a striking feature of the gods in many religious traditions. The gods do as they please, and their actions are unpredictable. They may be friendly or hostile depending on their whim. Human life is lived in fear before the arbitrariness and lawlessness of the gods. A residue of this understanding of divine freedom is present in the theological voluntarism that made a strong impact upon the Reformed tradition. Especially in doctrines of the inscrutable and completely arbitrary decrees of God by which some creatures are ordained to salvation and others to eternal damnation, we see the continuing influence of the definition of divine freedom as arbitrariness. There is a remarkable likeness between this idea of the freedom of God as caprice and the popular view of human freedom as having its maximal expression in doing whatever one pleases. In a so-called secular society voluntarism as a doctrine of God has long been forgotten. All that remains is its mirror image in

the understanding of human freedom as an arbitrary act of will.

A second tendency apparent in the traditional doctrine of God is that the freedom of God is construed primarily as negative freedom. God is perfectly free from all entanglements with the world. God is absolutely unlimited. God is affected by nothing. God is pure freedom, the unconditioned reality. This view of God's freedom is also rooted in antiquity. It is in fact a highly sophisticated doctrine of the freedom of God and functions as a critical alternative to what it considers a vulgar notion of divine whim and caprice. Aristotle spoke of God as the unmoved mover, the transcendent reality which attracted all things to itself but was itself moved or affected by nothing. For Aristotle God is incapable of friendship, for friendship involves affecting and being affected by another. Even a casual inspection of the doctrine of God's attributes in scholastic theology will detect the extent of influence of this conception of God's freedom as purely negative, as freedom from all constraining or conditioning relationships. God's immutability describes his freedom from change caused by another. God's omnipotence describes his absolute determination of all others without being determined by them in any way. God's impassibility describes his unconditional freedom from all passion and suffering. If the principle of correlation holds true, if our understanding of God and our understanding of human life and society shape each other, the doctrine of the pure negative freedom of God has the most serious repercussions. What is the human image of the God who is pure, transcendent freedom if not the abso-

lute monarch or dictator? And for the multitudes of human beings who cannot exercise absolute freedom and power in the political and social spheres, what is the human image of the perfect negative freedom of God if not the privatized and unrelated self, each individual's unmoved mover, magisterially indifferent and apathetic toward others, toward the future of society and the destiny of the groaning creation?<sup>1</sup>

The theology of the freedom of God has thus been caught between the Scylla of an abstract freedom to do as one pleases and the Charybdis of an abstract negative freedom from all external constraints. On the one hand, the freedom of God has been conceived in an all-too-human way as the exercise of arbitrary and capricious will. This God who does whatever he pleases is nothing but the anthropomorphic projection of the sinful human condition of self-centeredness. On the other hand, and in criticism of this anthropomorphic conception of divine freedom, sophisticated theology supposedly de-anthropomorphizes its conception of God. Thus God is not he who does whatever he pleases, but he who is absolutely free from all others. This view of God's freedom turns out to be no less anthropomorphic and no less inhuman. Freedom is defined by utter relationlessness, which is only another name for death. God becomes a prisoner of his own freedom. There are obviously important differences be-

tween construing God's freedom as absolute arbitrariness on the one hand and as absolute unrelatedness on the other. Nevertheless, both views fail miserably when measured against the scriptural account of the free covenantal activity of God. They also fall short of the modern consciousness of freedom as self-determination and self-development. Hence the challenge of modern atheism seems understandable and even theologically legitimate. If the arbitrary God exists, human freedom is impossible. If the God who is pure negative freedom exists, the human struggle for freedom is of no concern to him. In either case, God must be overcome that humanity might become free. This is surely the inmost meaning of the modern critique of belief in God as illusion (Freud), as ideology (Marx), and as decadence (Nietzsche). The "death of God" is celebrated as the necessary condition of the birth of human freedom.

### III

Many efforts to reconstruct the traditional doctrine of God have been made in the modern period. In North America this pursuit has been especially associated with process theology. In the view of process thought the classical doctrine of God is both philosophically incoherent and biblically inappropriate. Defined as absolute, immutable and impassible, the God of the classical tradition cannot be coherently said to enter into the real internal relationships with the world which the biblical witness affirms and Christian believers assume. Process theology understands itself as the theology of freedom par excellence. It argues that God, as conceived by process thought, is not the enemy but the ground of human free-

<sup>1</sup> For a criticism of the definition of freedom as the absence of external obstacles see Charles Taylor, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty," in *The Idea of Freedom*, edited by Alan Ryan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 175-193.



dom. It contends that a truly strong and comprehensive theology of liberation can be developed within the process vision. The rethinking of the doctrine of God in process thought proceeds according to strict analogy. We experience ourselves as free agents influencing and being influenced by others. Freedom is neither caprice nor unconditionedness but self-determination by way of creative synthesis. Self-determination happens in a social context. It is relative rather than absolute, partial rather than total. Within the network of relationships which constitute the given inheritance of each decision of the self, the self is relatively free, relatively self-determining. The self's decisions in turn contribute to the self-creation of other selves. And what is true of human freedom is also true of divine freedom. The strict analogical reasoning employed by process thought yields two metaphysical truths concerning freedom: the first, that "nothing whatever, not even God, can wholly determine the being of something else," and second, "that whatever is, even God, is in part determined by the being of other things."<sup>2</sup> According to the first principle, God does not totally control others but optimizes the limits of their freedom. God is the lure of human self-creation and emancipation. According to the second principle, God's perfection is not his unrelatedness but his supreme relativity. God is that reality which is supremely affected by what happens in the world. God takes into himself all of the world's experience and is thus the redeemer of the world. Thus according to process thought,

God is di-polar, "primordial" as presenter of new possibilities, "consequent" as the one in whom all achieved value is redeemed from perishing. God is both emancipator and redeemer, both a liberating power working for the optimum self-determination of creatures and the redeemer of all that is achieved in history.

The dynamic view of reality and the affirmation of the internal relatedness of God to the world make process theology an impressive modern alternative to the older doctrines of God. Freedom is seen as self-determination, and self-determination is understood in the context of the sociality or relationality of all beings. There is an obvious shift here from thinking of the freedom of God primarily as negative freedom, "freedom from," to thinking of it as positive freedom, "freedom for," i.e. freedom for self-determination in interaction with other centers of freedom. This shift in understanding the freedom of God undoubtedly achieves a greater coherence with the biblical witness than the views criticized earlier. Nevertheless, process theology is not an entirely satisfactory reconceptualization of the biblical witness to the freedom of God and to human freedom in the light of God's freedom, and for two central reasons. First, the process view of freedom as creative synthesis, as self-determination in response to the inherited past and in view of the still unactualized future, does not adequately express the abyss of human bondage or the novum of real freedom according to the biblical witness. As Paul, Augustine and the Reformers would surely have insisted, the process of self-determination and creative synthesis is corrupted by self-interest. Our actuali-

<sup>2</sup> See Schubert M. Ogden, *Faith and Freedom: Toward a Theology of Liberation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979) pp. 69-95.



zation of freedom is profoundly flawed. In view of this flaw, the process model of creative synthesis, which seems to presuppose that all centers of freedom will act for the promotion of the fullest possible self-actualization of other centers of freedom, is excessively idealistic. The model of freedom as self-determination in a process of creative synthesis, while certainly preferable to the models of freedom as caprice or indifference, still does not capture the distinctively biblical understanding of the freedom of God and of true human freedom.

This brings us to the second reason the process description of freedom is inadequate. The root of the inadequacy is that a particular conception of human freedom, based in common experience, is generalized and applied by strict analogy to all beings, including God. Use of analogy in theology is both necessary and justified. We no doubt have some dim apprehensions and intimations of genuine freedom, even as fallen, sinful creatures. But it is hazardous to assume that the freedom of God can be strictly read off our own experience. Our experience and understanding of freedom must be modified and transformed in the light of revelation. The proper meaning of analogy, as employed in theology, must be "ever greater dissimilarity in ever greater similarity."<sup>3</sup> The problem with the analogy of freedom as employed in process thought is that the dissimilarity of God's freedom to our fallen, enslaved freedom is obscured. The emphasis falls upon the fact that God is, like all beings, both self-determining

and determined by other selves. The distinctiveness of the divine freedom cannot come into view in this approach. If what we call the freedom of God is not to be merely a projection of our ideals, even our noblest democratic ideals, we shall have to pay close attention to God's own definition of his freedom in his actual relationship to us. We cannot answer the question of the freedom of God in the abstract. Rather we have to turn to the particularity of the relationship between God and the world as this is concretely portrayed in the biblical narratives. We cannot read the freedom of God off our conceptions of human freedom, even our most refined conceptions. We require a concrete instance of God's freedom. We need a human expression of God's freedom. This is what the history of Jesus Christ, and supremely the passion and death of Jesus Christ, constitutes for Christian believers. I do not say that our understanding of freedom must be derived entirely and exclusively from christology. I do contend that our understanding of freedom is corrected and transformed in the light of Christ. The *analogia libertatis* must be an *analogia libertatis Christi*. Only in this way can we speak of God's freedom and of authentic human freedom concretely rather than speculatively.

#### IV

When the freedom of God is illumined christocentrically, then it appears as a very specific freedom. The freedom of God in Christ is concrete and determinate. It is not an abstract "freedom from" but a particular "freedom for." It is not primarily a negative but a positive freedom. The freedom of

<sup>3</sup> Eberhard Jüngel, *Gott als Geheimnis der Welt* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1977), pp. 402-403.

God is neither arbitrariness nor absoluteness. Even self-determination and autonomy are inadequate as definitions of God's freedom in the light of the Gospel, for the self-determination of God is singular. It is self-determination in self-communication. The freedom of God is the freedom to love. According to the Gospel narrative, it is *this* freedom of God which is the ground and criterion of authentic human freedom. The attributes of God, including and especially the attributes of love, power and freedom, are not to be defined apart from the Gospel narrative and then imposed upon that narrative. "The meaning of love for Christians is not a vague abstraction; it is defined by the entire story which the life of Jesus has told and which the risen Christ continues to tell in his church. The meaning of Christian love, as found in such a statement as 'God is love,' cannot be abstracted from the life-story which revealed it and defined it. To do so would distort it."<sup>4</sup> The same reasoning holds for a right understanding of the freedom of God. "When we say that God is free, the accent does not fall on 'free' but on 'God'.<sup>5</sup> The freedom of God is not simply an extension and magnification of the freedom which we know or think we know so well in our own histories. "If the *Son* shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (Jn. 8:36). The identity of God and the nature of his freedom are concretely described by God's covenantal action with

Israel and definitively by the Gospel narrative. For the Christian community it is the history of Jesus Christ which supplies the decisive analogy of the freedom of God and of true human freedom.

According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus is the person radically free for God and for others.<sup>6</sup> This is evident in the preaching of Jesus, in his prayer, in his action and decisively in his passion. Jesus *proclaims* the imminence of God's gracious and righteous rule and thus announces freedom to the captives of sin, disease and injustice. Jesus *prays* and teaches others to pray with a new freedom. He rejects all prayer that functions as a form of religious narcissism and self-gratification. He teaches his disciples to pray first and foremost for the hallowing of God's name, the coming of God's kingdom, the doing of God's will on earth. In addressing God as "Abba" Jesus affirms that the ultimate power with whom we have to do is not like a monarch who reigns in splendid indifference to his subjects or like a taskmaster who lords it over his servants but like a caring parent. The God whose name is "Abba" is free for his creatures. His freedom to love includes especially sinners and the downtrodden.<sup>7</sup>

But Jesus not only proclaims God's kingdom and prays for its coming; he *incarnates* God's liberating freedom for

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller statement of Jesus as "the different liberator" see Daniel L. Migliore, *Called to Freedom: Liberation Theology and the Future of Christian Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), pp. 43-62.

<sup>7</sup> On the significance of the prayer of Jesus for a theology of liberation, see Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978), pp. 146-178.

<sup>4</sup> John Navone, *Towards a Theology of Story* (Slough, England: St. Paul Publications, 1977), pp. 86-87.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, Vol. II, Part I*, trans. by T.H.L. Parker et al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), p. 320.

others in his actions, in his assurances and deeds of forgiveness, in his table-fellowship with sinners and outcasts, in his friendship with women, the handicapped, the sick and the poor. According to the Gospels, Jesus' freedom is the supreme expression of God's freedom. It is a surprising and judging manifestation of divine freedom. God's freedom is not described abstractly as limitless power nor as perfect relationlessness. God's freedom in action is his very own self-communicating love. This cannot be defined primarily as a negative quality. The church has misconceived the gospel message when it has interpreted Jesus' sinlessness as his exemplary freedom from moral fault. Jesus' sinlessness is something positive: it is his total dedication to and freedom for God's inbreaking kingdom of righteous love.<sup>8</sup>

The specific and singular freedom of God manifest in the freedom of Jesus finds its ultimate expression in the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. One must ask with astonishment how any theology which intended to be responsible to the biblical witness could assume that it was possible to speak of God's freedom without reference to the story of Jesus and its climax in the resurrection of the crucified. The cross must stand at the center of a Christian understanding of the freedom of God, certainly not the cross without the resurrection, but most emphatically not the resurrection without the cross. Moreover, the mysterious double conclusion of the life of Jesus must not be separated from the concrete life-story of the one who is free

for the godless and the god-forsaken. The cross manifests God's freedom for love that judges by forgiving and protests against oppression by entering into utmost solidarity with the oppressed. The resurrection manifests God's freedom to be victorious in and through this self-giving love which is stronger than sin and death. The strange freedom which God exercises in his covenantal relationship with Israel and above all in the ministry, death and resurrection of Christ arouses and sustains the passion of the whole creation for the full realization of freedom.

If we speak of God's freedom as "freedom for," as God's very own self-giving love, do we not thereby limit God? Is God not free from the world? Is God not free to judge as well as to love, to be against the world as well as for it? Is God not free to relate to the world other than he has in Jesus Christ—when and where and how he pleases? In short, is God not sovereign, independent, self-sufficient? Is God not God? Our answers to these questions must be disciplined by the Gospel message rather than contradicting or obscuring it. To be sure, that God is free for others does not mean that he is enslaved to others. The freedom which he manifests in his work does not exhaust his freedom. God is not a prisoner of his freedom for the world. God is free to love not only in relation to us but also in himself. We are afraid that if we do not posit a dark and indeterminate freedom of God behind his freedom to love, we will lose the deity of God. This fear is unfounded, and leads us away from the Gospel. God's freedom is not the freedom of dark indifference. It is not a neutral capacity of

<sup>8</sup> See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), pp. 349-364.

choice between alternatives. God's freedom ad intra and ad extra is freedom with a definite direction and content. God's freedom means that his self-communication is his own, that his love for the world derives from and is consistent with his inmost nature. We rightly affirm the "deity of God" not by positing it as something behind and perhaps quite different from the "humanity of God," but by acknowledging his love as his own, as coming from the depths of his being without constraint. God's love is his own and he loves in his own way: that is his freedom.

Thus God is under no compulsion to create the world nor does it arise from some internal lack or need. Creation derives solely from the gracious decision of God to be God not only with and for himself but also with and for the world. God does indeed judge the world, but his definitive judgment is his act of mercy, his taking the judgment which we deserve upon himself in the passion and death of Christ. God is indeed related to the world in many ways, but the open mystery of all his relationships to the world, when and where and how he pleases, is Jesus Christ. To speak of God's freedom as the freedom to love, specifically the freedom to love the unloved and unlovable, the stranger, the alien, the enemy; to speak of God's freedom as the freedom to enter into liberating and reconciling solidarity with sinners and those who are afflicted and suffer injustice—this is not to limit the freedom of God but to recognize its particular glory, its special beauty. All that we properly call the freedom of God is congruent with God's exercise of freedom in Jesus Christ.

In the doctrine of the Trinity the

church affirms that God is the one who is free to love and who loves freely in himself as well as in relation to us. God's freedom for his creatures is grounded in his inmost nature. Even in himself God is not an absolute ego, unrelated to another. Love is freely given and received in the eternal life of the triune God. We know this to be true of the inmost reality of God because God has so exercised his freedom toward us in his works of creation, redemption and sanctification. God's exercise of freedom ad extra is faithful to his eternal triune life as the one who loves in freedom.<sup>9</sup>

## V

We began by saying that our understandings of God and of ourselves are correlative. We have noted specifically that our understandings of the freedom of God and of human freedom are intertwined. If the freedom of God is seen in the light of the Gospel, what are the implications for an understanding of authentic human freedom? We conclude with five brief responses to this question.

*First*, if we acknowledge the singularity of God's freedom as the freedom of self-communicating love, we will confess that such freedom manifests itself in our history and experience only as a gift.<sup>10</sup> It appears as something new in our world. For we do not exercise our freedom this way. Instead we are inclined to turn our freedom in the

<sup>9</sup> For a fuller statement of the significance of the doctrine of the Trinity for the theme of this essay, see Daniel L. Migliore, *Called to Freedom*, pp. 63-79.

<sup>10</sup> See Karl Barth, "The Gift of Freedom," in *The Humanity of God* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), pp. 69-96.



direction of ourselves or our kin-group, to seek self- or group actualization without regard for others. The corruption and injustice of our existing social orders stand under God's judgment. At the same time even our best liberating causes are not themselves free from sin and bondage to self-interest. When freedom is not received as a gift, it becomes an unbearable burden. We may try to escape from the burden of giftless freedom by adopting the new dependencies of political or religious totalitarianism or social and economic conformism.<sup>11</sup> The first thing that must be said of human freedom in the light of God's concrete exercise of freedom is that our freedom is in need of liberation. The grace of God in Jesus Christ is the gift of freedom for others. The Gospel does not speak to us first of our freedom but of God's freedom to forgive and accept us and then on that basis of our freedom.

*Second*, the freedom for others which is the gift of grace is motivated by thanksgiving and joy. It is not driven by parasitic neediness nor by self-hatred nor by the desire for revenge. Freedom for others established by grace is not the flight of an empty or bitter self to another in order to consume the other or to become absorbed in the other. There is a legitimate and wholesome and necessary self-affirmation in the context of God's affirmation of us and his invitation to us to find our true selves in inclusive community, in mature life-in-relationship with him and with others. Freedom for others does not have its primary motivation in a guilty conscience. It is qualitatively

different from all patronizing attitudes. Authentic freedom for others is rooted in the thankful and joyful acknowledgment that God has created and redeemed us all to live in the freedom of friendship with him and with our fellow creatures.

*Third*, the real test of our human freedom for others is our freedom for those who are really different from us, for the strangers, the aliens, the outcasts, the sinners, the godforsaken, the future generations.<sup>12</sup> The church has always emphasized this freedom for the really different others in the proclamation of the gospel to sinners. The gospel is not proclaimed only to those who conform to certain standards or pass certain tests of acceptability but to those commonly adjudged out of bounds and lost. But what the church to this very day has insufficiently recognized is that the radical freedom of God for others, declared in the proclamation of the gospel to sinners, is the basis of our affirmation of and joyful communion with those who are racially different from us, those who come out of different histories and cultures, those who are of a different sex or class or marked as different by a physical or mental handicap or sickness. Racism, sexism and classism are nothing less than fundamental contradictions of the gospel of God's freedom for others. So also is a way of life that rapaciously consumes non-renewable energy sources and is indifferent both to the living poor and to the silent genera-

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1965).

<sup>12</sup> This has been a central theme of the writings of Jürgen Moltmann. See his most recent book, *Menschenwürde Recht und Freiheit* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1979), pp. 81-95.

tions of humanity who will inhabit the earth after us.

*Fourth*, freedom for those who are radically different from us has important implications in both the political and economic spheres. The world today is divided to a large extent into the advocates of so-called political freedoms on the one side and the advocates of so-called real or economic freedoms on the other.<sup>13</sup> For the former, freedom means essentially freedom of speech, of the press, of cultural activity, of political dissent, of due process under laws made and administered by freely elected representatives. For the latter, freedom means freedom from poverty, from hunger, from exploitation, from unjust distribution of wealth, all of which are the condition of the possibility of real self-development and self-determination. The church and theology must affirm both of these kinds of freedom as implications of the gospel of freedom. Freedom of speech is a sign, in the civil and political sphere, of the freedom of God who addresses his Word to all his creatures. And a just economic order where all are free from poverty is a sign, in the economic sphere, of the freedom of God for the poor and the victims of injustice. The peculiar witness of the church in a world torn into camps of advocacy of political freedoms on the one hand and advocacy of economic freedoms on the other is to insist on the importance of

both freedoms and to point to their common basis in the freedom of the God of the gospel. True human freedom in the light of the gospel takes the form of self-limitation and costly sacrifice for the sake of the new and inclusive community God is bringing about.

*Fifth*, and finally, human freedom shaped by the freedom of God is freedom in hope. There are real foretastes of God's kingdom of freedom in history here and now. Christ is risen. The Spirit of new life and freedom is at work in the world. The oppressive principalities and powers of this world do not terrify and paralyze us. There is even an authentic Christian freedom in relation to death, the "freedom to decipher the signs of the resurrection under the contrary appearance of death."<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, freedom in history remains incomplete. Its realizations are never final, are always anticipatory of a total kingdom of freedom. Thus freedom remains something for which we pray and wait as well as something we presently possess or for which we struggle. Freedom in hope resists the totalitarian solutions offered by the ideological movements on both the right and the left. Christian freedom rooted in the freedom of God is freedom in solidarity with the whole groaning creation. We are free in hope when, in all of our doing and suffering and praying, we are open to the arrival of "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21).

<sup>13</sup> Two valuable philosophical discussions of the divergent understandings of freedom in the modern era are: Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958) and Raymond Aron, *An Essay on Freedom* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1970).

<sup>14</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "Freedom in the Light of Hope," in *The Conflict of Interpretations* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 410.

# The Integrity of Evangelism

by RICHARD S. ARMSTRONG

*Appointed in 1980 as Princeton's first Ashenfelter Professor of Ministry and Evangelism, the Rev. Richard S. Armstrong, a native of Baltimore, Md., is an alumnus of Princeton and Harvard Universities, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis). He served initially in business and administration, held pastorates in Pennsylvania and Indiana, and was director of development at Princeton, 1968-74. He is the author of a definitive volume on evangelism, Service Evangelism (Westminster, 1979).*

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HERACLITUS, the weeping philosopher of Ephesus, who taught that everything in nature is constantly changing, declared that you cannot step into the same river twice. Nevertheless, I have stepped into this river called Princeton six times: twice as an undergraduate at the University, once as a resident for several months while I commuted to work in Philadelphia, a fourth time as a student here at Princeton Seminary, a fifth time some years later as a member of the administrative staff, and now for the sixth and last time (I hope), I am at the river bank again, ready to plunge in as a member of the faculty.

But Heraclitus was right. It is not the same river. It is not the same faculty. It is not the same student body. It is not the same world.

I thought long and hard about my topic for tonight. Realizing that in a single address I could not do justice to two such comprehensive subjects as ministry *and* evangelism, and feeling that you might be more interested in what someone would have to say about evangelism than about ministry, I decided to focus on the former. I hope, however, that what I am going to say

is applicable to ministry in general.

My remarks are not intended to make a case for a Chair of Evangelism at Princeton Seminary. Nor is it my intention to advocate a method for teaching evangelism to seminary students. Rather, I want to discuss what I consider to be the fundamentals of integrity for those who teach, or practice, or even talk about evangelism in the church, or on the campus, or wherever. This address could have been titled, "The ABC's of Evangelistic Integrity," since the letters stand for three words which summarize the content of that integrity.

## I

The first word is AWARENESS. Most of us are aware that evangelism is a controversial subject. It is controversial because some people confuse their definition of evangelism with their concept of method—the meaning with the means. They are opposed to evangelism because they don't like the way some people do it, so they throw out the baby with the bath water.

We who teach or talk about evangelism need to be aware of that confusion, lest we contribute to it, instead

of helping to dispel it. We need to realize that there is an appropriate evangelistic style for every time and place, and the challenge is to know how to relate the approach to the setting, how to coordinate the medium and the message.

But what is evangelism? The Church of England's Commission on Evangelism adopted this classic definition in 1918 and reaffirmed it in 1945, and it has been widely used ever since: "To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that [people] shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Savior and serve him as their King in the fellowship of his Church."

The question is not whether to evangelize or *not* to evangelize; that question has been answered for us by the mandate of Jesus Christ himself, who has commissioned us to go and make disciples of all nations and to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. We have been reminded of that commission over and over again in the mandates laid upon their constituents by every denomination and council of churches. Pope John Paul II has proclaimed it the primary task of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Governing Board of the National Council of Churches adopted unanimously a policy statement which declared evangelism to be "a primary function of the church in its congregational, denominational, and ecumenical manifestations."

In a document entitled "A Theological Reflection on the work of Evangelism," the Division of Studies of the World Council of Churches stated that, "The basic urgency of evangelism arises . . . from the nature and content

of the gospel itself, and its authority lies in the recognition by all believers that they have been claimed by Christ precisely for the purpose of becoming his witnesses" (p. 15). In another document reflecting on "The Missionary Task of the Church," the World Council affirmed that Christians are bound to confront all people with the decision to commit themselves to Jesus Christ.

Deeply concerned about the alarming decline in membership, the 188th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church approved the report of a special committee which called upon each congregation to study its own patterns of membership and formulate specific plans of action. The following year the 189th General Assembly reaffirmed the belief that "God's saving love in Jesus Christ includes all people," and acknowledged the church's responsibility to share that good news in word and deed with people everywhere.

Year after year the General Assembly has called upon the United Presbyterian churches to give top priority to evangelism. Other denominations have issued similar mandates to their member congregations. So the question is not *whether* to evangelize, but *how* to evangelize, and for thoughtful Christians that means how to evangelize with integrity. For we are aware of the dangers of the resurgence of a hyper-conservative, evangelical aggressiveness too often characterized by a superficial, pietistic, literalistic, judgmental, insensitive, a-theological, anti-intellectual, irrelevant, obscurantist style of evangelism.

Integrity demands that we be aware of these dangers and avoid them. We live in a pluralistic world, where the



truth-claims of other religions and philosophies are sounding loud and clear, and we cannot act as if there are no other appeals than ours for human hearts and minds, or that God listens only to Christian prayers, as the President of the Southern Baptist Convention stated recently. We can have our Christian beliefs and express them with conviction, but we won't win many followers for Christ with an arrogant, holier-than-thou attitude, like the would-be evangelists who distributed Christian literature in the parking lot and vestibule of a Cherry Hill, New Jersey, synagogue during a service. The rabbi was justifiably indignant, when he wrote in an article entitled, "Cry, Little Jesus," from a song he had once heard: "Is this Christianity? Is this Christian ethics—to sneak into a synagogue and disseminate the word of Jesus? If it is, then Cry, Little Jesus, for there is much to cry about. Cry, Little Jesus, for your followers who think that their God could sanction such devious methods of propagating the faith. Cry, Little Jesus, for those who invoke your name while stooping to new lows in spreading your gospel. Cry, Little Jesus, for sick souls who are out to capture Jewish souls, to seduce the followers of Moses in a Jewish house of worship and a darkened parking lot."

What a message for Yom Kippur! That incident occurred about seven years ago. More recently, Jews have themselves become "evangelistic." "Judaism from birth has been a missionary religion," Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, representing 750 Reform temples, was quoted as saying by NEWSWEEK

magazine a year ago, "Abraham was a missionary. We ought to resume our time-honored tradition" (August 13, 1979, p. 45). Conservative Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, of the American Jewish Committee, agreed, commenting in the same article that "the Jewish people have a moral obligation to testify to the truths, values and life-styles that Judaism uniquely provides."

The reality of this development was brought home to me when a member of a Conservative synagogue showed up for an evangelism seminar which I conducted at the Center of Continuing Education here in Princeton. A very intelligent woman with a Ph.D. in social psychology explained that her reason for attending was to learn the techniques of Christian evangelism and take them back to her synagogue. Since then we have become "pen pals," and her letters have been sometimes bitterly frank. Here is a sample: "I say you are selling false doctrine. You [Christians] love Jesus, not God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom Christians call their 'spiritual father.' Indeed, I felt a sadness, even envy, thinking, If all that love and tenderness for Jesus were meant for the Reality, God. For the 1800 years of false witness Christianity has brought against Judaism, started by the Jew Saul, I, this Jew, hold that Christian worship of the Jew Jesus is a form of Baal-worship, idolatry; and in God's good time and grace, it will cease."

Evangelistic integrity demands an awareness that we live in a society where such feelings exist, where religious tolerance is considered a virtue and most people have an antipathy toward imposing their beliefs on others, where enlightened spirits are calling

for inter-faith dialogue, and ecumenism means more than a merger of several Protestant denominations. An ecumenical temper, wrote David Stowe, former Executive Officer of the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches, "welcomes relationships with others of diverse points of view . . . and this almost necessarily implies a degree of tentativeness about one's own particular expression of faith" (*Ecumenicity and Evangelism*, p. 12).

But there is still the mandate. So we are faced with the challenge of knowing how to fulfill the Great Commission while espousing the right of people to worship or not to worship as they please, how to bear witness in a pluralistic society, how to be both evangelistic and ecumenical at the same time. There are many other challenges of which we must also be aware, such as those imposed upon us by linguistic analysis, which questions the meaningfulness of God-language, and logical positivism, which challenges the validity of any statement which cannot be verified or falsified by empirical evidence. Average unchurched Americans may never have heard of linguistic analysis or logical positivism, but they think in those categories. They don't understand our language games, and they don't accept our truth claims.

Add to those the challenges of secular humanism, materialism, communism and other ideologies, superstitions like astrology, religious cults, psychological fads, the electronic church, the Playboy-Playgirl philosophy, and all the other influences with which would-be evangelists must compete, plus the innumerable problems with which our faith must cope, such as nuclear power,

toxic waste, the arms race, poverty, world hunger, political corruption, pollution, inflation, the energy crisis, the rehabilitation of Asian, Hispanic and other refugees, unemployment, racial injustice, international terrorism, crime, violence, the Moral Majority and the immoral minority, to mention just a few, all of which underscore the immensity of our educational task. We who are teaching future ministers must realize that the integrity of their witness in the world will depend first of all upon their realistic awareness of the kind of world it is. It is up to us to help prepare them for the mandate of Christ and the church, and of the world that awaits them outside these walls.

## II

That calls also for BALANCE, which is the second basic ingredient of the integrity of evangelism, and indeed of ministry in general. As a former pastor, I can testify to the need for integrating the theological disciplines with the practice of ministry. This is the cry of most seminary graduates, who in their first two weeks in the parish inevitably encounter situations for which they feel ill prepared. What did I, as a recent Seminary graduate, know about ministering in a predominantly Jewish community? Or about training evangelistic callers? Or about organizing a stewardship campaign? Or about renovating a church? No one had told me what to do when the president of the Board of Trustees informed me that the minister was not permitted to attend their meetings.

But I never blamed the Seminary for such omissions, and I did not feel unprepared, because I had been given the basic tools for ministry and I had

learned to think theologically. I realized that no matter how practical my professors might have tried to make my courses, they could never anticipate every situation that might arise. Nor did I ever think that was their task. It is important, nevertheless, for a seminary to try to integrate the practical and the classical dimensions of theological education. That's why we have a Department of Practical Theology, one of whose functions is to do just that. To be sure, it is a function in which the other departments share, as each professor sees opportunities to relate his or her discipline to the practice of ministry. That is more easily done in some disciplines than in others, obviously.

What is called for is balance. The age-old debate between those who perceive a seminary to be a graduate school of religion and those who see it as a professional school is perpetuating an unfortunate dichotomy. A seminary cannot allow itself to be one or the other, but somehow must strive to be both. As one who spent sixty semester hours in a graduate school of religion at a major university, I know the difference. It was not easy to apply what I was studying to the practical demands of the pastorate. In the midst of typing one of my term papers, my exasperated secretary verbalized her frustration with my theological jargon, threatening that if I ever used that kind of language in the pulpit, she would leave the church!

That illustrates an important task of ministry, which is that of constantly trying to elevate the level of people's theological competence, their appreciation of sacred music, their understanding of stewardship, their commitment

to the church, the quality of their discipleship, their moral sensitivity, their social awareness, and every other aspect of their spiritual lives, *without losing touch with where they are*. The wise shepherd never runs too far ahead of the flock. We who teach must help our students to develop the skills to do this, the ability to apply theological principles to practical situations. We must help them to see how their theology informs and illumines and determines their ministry.

But the *onus* is not entirely *on us* as teachers. For the principle of balance applies also to students, who in their understandable demand for the practical skills must not lose sight of their need for theological competence. In their impatience to get out into the "real world," too many students fail to appreciate the fantastic opportunity afforded them by their three years at seminary. Many will never again have the same chance for such an extended period of theological reflection and serious, disciplined study. It is extremely difficult to claim and to carve out the time for concentrated study amid the demands and pressures of the parish ministry. The wise student will take advantage of these precious years, and enjoy them while he or she can. It is the proper balance of practical skill and sound theology which will give integrity to one's ministry, and especially to one's evangelistic efforts, which are part of one's ministry.

You and I may not consider ourselves evangelists; but we must find those who have the gift and equip them to do the work of the evangelist. That is a task which calls for awareness and for balance. Consider the relationship between evangelism and social action.



The personal salvationists and the social activists are still at each other's throats. They argue about another false dichotomy. The relationship between evangelism and social action is not either/or, but both/and. Although it should be obvious, I have learned never to take it for granted that the both/and relationship is understood and accepted, especially by those who are inclined to stress one side over against the other. We who teach should not permit the dichotomy, which though real is wrong, to go unchallenged, whenever we encounter it.

An evangelistic approach that is truly concerned with reaching the whole person cannot overlook the social dimension of a person's life, or the context in which a person's life is lived. The love of Christ constrains us to be concerned about the needs of others, and that concern can and does involve us in the struggle for human justice, freedom and peace—not only as individuals, but as churches.

I am aware that what I have said violates the principles of the Church Growth Movement, which sees social action as a barrier to growth. Its advocates cite Dean Kelley's excellent sociological study of *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* in support of this view. Kelley would have preferred to refer to them as strict churches rather than conservative churches, but that is one more example of editorial prerogative. Churches cease to grow, says Kelley, when they depart from their central purpose, which is to answer the human quest for meaning. I do not doubt the accuracy of the statement. It is the accession to it and the use of it which is one of my points of contention

with the Church Growth Movement—that, and the principle of homogeneity. Donald McGavran's observation that people "like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers" (*Understanding Church Growth*, p. 198) is undoubtedly true, but does that mean that churches should therefore seek only their own kind? "Of all the scientific hypotheses developed within the Church Growth framework, this one as nearly as any approaches a law," writes C. Peter Wagner (*Your Church Can Grow*, p. 110).

The Church Growth advocates are echoing what Gibson Winter pointed out more than twenty years ago in his book, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches*, which was a penetrating sociological analysis of the exodus of the mainline white churches from the city to suburbia. Whereas the mark of the primitive church was social inclusiveness—rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, slave and free—the characteristic of the church of the metropolis is exclusiveness, based largely upon economic status. "A few highbrows and a few lowbrows can be thrown into a congregational mix, but the core group has to be drawn from similar occupational, income group, educational level, ethnic background, and residential level if the congregation is to survive," wrote Professor Winter (pp. 66-67). The key to Protestant church-going is the search by middle-class people for socially homogeneous groupings, and the key to homogeneity is the economic level. "A Protestant congregation collapses when it cannot recruit a socially homogeneous membership" (p. 69).

My contention with the Church

Growth advocates is that, whereas Gibson Winter rued the fact of congregational homogeneity, they are advocating it as an evangelistic principle. And whereas Dean Kelley appealed for churches to show their members how their social causes fit in with their meaning system, the Church Growth people advocate minimal if any involvement by the church in social action. "To the degree that socially involved churches become engaged in social action, as distinguished from social service, they can expect church growth to diminish," says Peter Wagner (p. 158).

By no means do I intend to imply by what I have said that church growth is not a legitimate emphasis, nor even a valid priority for every congregation. My concern is for the integrity of evangelism, which should be color-blind and class-blind. Awareness does not permit us to deny the way things are, but balance demands that we question whether that's the way things ought to be. Our evangelistic call is not to be homogeneous congregations, but to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, not to seek first the people like us but to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, not to be the community's most successful organization, but to be Christ's servant community. The people of Israel were called not to indulge their chosen status but to be God's faithful witnesses to the nations, and we Christians are called not only to relate to those with whom we feel comfortable but to follow where the Lord of the church leads us.

Do we not still believe that the love of Jesus Christ can transcend the barriers that separate us one from another?

Has he not broken down the dividing walls of hostility? As long as there are segregated neighborhoods, there will be segregated churches; and as long as there are segregated churches, there will be segregated neighborhoods. The need is for inclusive congregations with pluralistic programs in which many different kinds of people can find meaning and fulfillment. The evangelistic challenge is not to ignore or deny our racial, social, or class differences, but by the grace of Christ to transcend them.

The integrity of evangelism in a pluralistic society calls for a balanced theology, as well as a balanced program. I am not suggesting that there should not be traditional emphases or denominational differences; I am appealing for a theology that attempts to present the whole gospel, not a one-sided version of it. Whenever there ceases to be a proper balance, the seeds of a new sect are sown. Those whose ultimate questions are not dealt with will seek their answers elsewhere.

A pluralistic society calls for a pluralistic church, which means a proper balance between the personal and the social gospel, between the traditional and the contemporary in worship, between a unified and a diversified membership, between ethnic identity and spiritual unity, between a pastoral and a prophetic ministry, between outreach and nurture, between proclamation and communication, between evangelism and church renewal, between growth and mission. There is a fine line between wanting the church to grow and making a fetish of church growth, between growth as a means to the end of mission, and growth as an

end in itself. It behooves us to know the difference, if our evangelism is to have integrity.

### III

But the integrity of evangelism depends not only upon our awareness of the mandate and the balance of our message. It has to do also, and most importantly, with the CREDIBILITY of the messenger. Integrity demands that we get our own faith-house in order before we try to win others to Christ. That process should be the #1 priority of our seminary experience. What good is a theological education without faith? What good is knowledge without commitment? Is our ministry a career or a calling? If we are not called by God to be ministers, we have no right to be called ministers of God.

Most students come to seminary with a genuine sense of call. They are highly motivated, eager to learn, full of idyllic expectations. But for some the spark sputters and dies, and they drop out of seminary, while others simply cool off. Excitement turns to cynicism, and personal beliefs are buried beneath the books. That's not just a Princeton syndrome. It happens everywhere, to varying degrees. The members of the senior class at one "main-line" Protestant seminary were asked to complete the Theological Schools Inventory (T.S.I.), a self-evaluation instrument which explores such things as motivation and decision. As a group they felt that both their sense of call and their desire to witness had declined considerably since they entered seminary.

What a tragic commentary on their seminary experience! It proves that we on the faculty have a pastoral as well

as a teaching responsibility to our students. We are here to produce not scholars of religion, but religious scholars, men and women of faith *and* knowledge. Is not a seminary a community of faith, and is it not the responsibility of the members of any community of faith to encourage each other's faith? It is the balance between piety and learning for which our Reformed tradition has always stood.

The American Association of Theological Schools has called for instruction that takes seriously the needs of students as persons, the vocation of ministry, and the life and mission of the church. According to AATS, the Master of Divinity Program should provide experiences in which students can grow in their personal faith and in their commitment to the practice of ministry. We may send forth from this campus well-educated graduates, but without that personal faith and strong commitment their preaching will have no power, their pastoral ministry no credibility, and their evangelism no integrity. If, as they say, faith is not taught but caught, then we all must be faith-carriers. It is as true of teachers as it is of evangelists that the impact of the message depends upon the credibility of the messenger. We lose credibility when our deeds deny our words. As one of the preliminary principles of our United Presbyterian Form of Government puts it: "There is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it." David Stowe reminds us that we need to bridge the credibility gap between what we say and what we do, as individuals and as a witnessing community. Chris-



tian proselytizing, divisiveness and competitiveness, says Stowe, are among the biggest reasons for the lack of credibility of Christians among people of other religions.

So the credibility of the messenger depends upon the quality of the messenger's faith, and it also depends upon the authority of the messenger's words. They will have authority if they are inspired by, based upon and true to the Word of God, which, as the Confession of 1967 declares, "is spoken to his church today where the Scriptures are faithfully preached and attentively read in dependence upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit and with readiness to receive their truth and direction" (I,C,2). A credible faith is an informed faith, as well as a sincere faith.

It is also an honest faith. That means admitting one's doubts, not ignoring or denying them. It means recognizing and confessing one's own faith assumptions. If my belief in God depended upon my ability to prove the existence of God, I could no longer believe. Faith is a gift. I cannot make myself believe what I cannot believe. Belief is not something I can make myself have; belief is something I find myself with. I wake up believing, and my faith is confirmed over and over again by my own experience of the God I believe in. God is not a provable fact, but for me God is a verifiable assumption.

Some evangelists lack credibility because they don't seem to recognize that they can't prove the existence of God. I read an article not long ago by a famous radio preacher, which was entitled "Seven Proofs God Exists." His arguments are his own improvisations on the Thomistic proofs, all of which

presuppose what they claim to prove. The preacher's first proof, for example, is that we live in a universe which is governed by laws. "The existence of LAW," he says, "unchangeable, immutable, irrevocable, unseen and yet active, ABSOLUTELY DEMANDS the existence of a GREAT LAW-GIVER! . . . That LAWGIVER is GOD!" So, too, the very existence of life demands a LIFEGIVER, and the GREAT LIFEGIVER is GOD. Or again, the fact of creation demands a Creator . . . God! Likewise, design in the universe proves the existence of a Designer . . . God! So it goes.

Tautological arguments like these will not convince an intelligent skeptic, and those who use them will lack credibility with hearers who see through them. So will those who use dishonest methods to gain their objectives. Success is not sinful, but what some people do to attain it may be. Witness the advice of a well-known newspaper columnist to a pastor wanting to know how to boost attendance: "Name at least three members of your audience (in your sermon) each Sunday (to illustrate or corroborate a point). . . . Those three who are named in a complimentary fashion naturally are pleased, so they think your sermon is better than usual! And then they contribute more generously, too. But all the other parishioners will also wake up, to look around and see where (so-and-so) is sitting! So everybody is stimulated. . . . And by naming three people relevantly each Sunday, you cover 150 families each year! Speak loudly, if you don't have a microphone. And abhor any overhanging mustache, for the latter obscures much of your lip movements! (Obviously he wasn't

thinking about women in ministry.) . . . Inject some appropriate humor to produce a laugh. . . . To obtain three pages of wholesome humor, decent and quite fit for pulpit use, follow what other professional speakers do and subscribe to *Quote*, the weekly magazine full of current brilliant quotations. It is published at Anderson, South Carolina, and ranks next to the Bible and a concordance as the clergyman's ally! . . . For additional advice, send for my booklet, 'Public Platform Psychology,' enclosing a long, stamped, return envelope, plus 25 cents." (George W. Crane, *The Indianapolis Star*, February 23, 1977.)

To employ such tactics for those reasons would be sinful, because the methods are manipulative and the motive is insincere. I don't know how you feel about it, but such a person would have very little credibility with me. The integrity of evangelism is not based on the cleverness of our gimmicks, but on the sincerity of our faith. The best way to strengthen the faith of others is to be an example of faith. Most people don't want a dissertation about God from the pulpit or in the living room; they want a message from a person who really believes in the God he or she is talking about. Our task as evangelists is not to prove that Jesus is the Christ; that we can never do. Our task is to show by the way we speak and act that we believe he is; and that, by God's grace, we do. Credibility is earned not by pretending to be perfect, but by being honest about our imperfections and sincere in our desire to be

perfect. Our evangelism will have integrity as long as we remember our own limitations and depend upon the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit is the converter of human hearts, not you and I. Whatever we do, therefore, must always be undergirded by prayer.

The awareness of the mandate, the balance of the message, the credibility of the messenger. These, then, are the ABC's of integrity for evangelism, and for all Christian ministry. Need I remind you that there are many other letters in the alphabet! The trouble with some of us is that we have forgotten our ABC's.

The story is told of a great admiral in the days when ships of war were sailing ships, who before every naval battle used to retire to his cabin, where he would take a piece of paper from his desk drawer and sit alone with his head bowed for a few minutes, meditating on what he had read. Then he would go out and take command of the fleet. One of the admiral's greatest admirers was his orderly, who would have given anything to know what wonderful words were written on that piece of paper which so inspired the admiral before each battle. Finally, the orderly's curiosity got the better of him, and at an opportune moment when the admiral was out on deck, the young man slipped into the stateroom, and with trembling hands opened the desk drawer and took out the piece of paper on which these words were written: "Starboard is right. Port is left." May God give us grace to remember our ABC's.



# The Future of the Mainline Churches

Sermon by  
EUGENE CARSON BLAKE

*A native of Missouri and an alumnus of Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary (where he is now a trustee), the name of Eugene Carson Blake is synonymous with distinguished churchmanship. He has served as a parish minister in New York and California, was elected Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in 1951, and from 1966 to 1972 served as General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. This sermon was delivered in the Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester, N.Y. on October 19, 1980.*

*"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." II Timothy 2:15*

**B**EFORE I begin to talk to you about the future of the mainline churches, of which I take it this is one, I want to thank you all for your reception here. I go back quite a long way in this Church when I was a pastor in upstate New York myself. This Church looks like my Church in Albany except it's about twice as big in size, but the Tiffany windows and all of the things indicate that it was built with the same idea and the same style at about the same time. But more than the buildings are the people, and I remember with joy knowing Paul Covey Johnston, William H. Hudnut, Conrad Massa, and now my namesake, Eugene Bay. I am also happy to see as we move along that we have men and women in the full, ordained ministry of this Church.

"Do we have any future?" is the question. If you read the newspaper, you would think that there is *no* future for the mainline churches. Religious news these days even in the best newspaper is either so secularly oriented that all religion appears irrelevant or tends to be thinking that the only news worth reporting about religion is the

activity of the churches like those of Oral Roberts, Bob Schuller, James Robison, Jerry Falwell, Armstrong (father and son) or others worse who have learned how to raise lots of money on radio and TV. They are not the mainline churches. Even Billy Graham hardly makes it these days. This is the kind of a time we are in. What future do you people have anyway? Don't kid yourselves.

For the last six Sundays you have been remembering the Great Parade of Faith illustrated by leaders of God's people from Abraham to Martin Luther King, Jr. These leaders you have been remembering included pioneers and pilgrims, renewers and reformers, servants and stewards, courageous witnesses, people of piety, and men and women of influence. That's quite a list. We ought to find some place where any of us fits, shouldn't we?

I have been asked this morning, however, to turn from the past and look with you to the future, and the question we must ask is whether the parade is over. Is there any future for the mainline churches? For the churches of the great parade of the past

were all in the mainstream of faith, biblical, Catholic and Protestant. Properly you have remembered more of the heroes of western Christianity than eastern (no eastern orthodox in the list, however, is a distortion). More Protestants than Roman Catholics, more North Americans than Europeans, more citizens of the United States than Asians, Africans or Latin Americans.

I mention this not in criticism but rather to illustrate how hard it is for us to know and feel ourselves a part of the whole Church, the holy catholic Church, the ecumenical Church.

This leads me to the first main part of my sermon. I am one who has great hope for the Church of Jesus Christ, specifically for the mainline churches of which this congregation is clearly a part. You were listening to the passage from the 8th Chapter of Romans which was read this morning. It had to do with hope. Paul says that you can't compare present troubles or sufferings with the wonders of God's future. Do we believe that anymore? Despite all the groaning and travail that precedes any birth, we have hope of the redemption and salvation that is coming. We have not merely individual and spiritual hope, but hope for the rule of God and hope for our rebirth and our adoption as God's children.

Paul made it clear that *hope* for the future is very different from proof. All of us like proof. "Now *hope* that is seen," says Paul, "is not *hope*. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do *not* see, we wait for it with patience."

Those in the mainstream of the Christian church need patience indeed as we wait these days and as we work in hope. The climax of Paul's argument

is, "If God is for us, who is against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure," concludes the apostle, "that neither death nor life nor angels nor things present nor things to come nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." That's the Christian hope. That brings us here this morning. That is the Christian faith.

How can we be sure that we will be among those who stay in that mainstream of the one church that you've been thinking about and hearing about. We can't be *sure*, but we can work at it and we can pray for it.

So my sermon this morning is in two main parts: first, three common Church characteristics that we must strive to avoid if we would stay in the mainstream, and three qualities of Christian life together we must strive to attain if we would be in the mainline.

## I

### (i)

The first distorting characteristic the Church or any part of it must strive to avoid is *provincialism*. Provincialism has always been a danger to the Church, but now in the last part of the 20th Century it is a greater threat than ever before.

Our whole world is now a neighborhood. But we still don't know how to

be neighbors to people 12,500 miles away, or even 500. My family came from Missouri and southern Ohio. In those days they read good books, but they didn't have any news. They didn't know what happened until so long after that it made no difference in their actions. But technology has pretty well eliminated distance as the chief excuse for provincialism. World War I changed it in my part of the world. "How can you keep them down on the farm, after they've seen gay Parie?" was the song as they came back, and that was the new thing that had happened, to not only them, but to all of us. The more common cause of provincialism today is cultural, not geographical. All of us find it hard to accept as fully human people who look odd to us, who don't speak our language, whose history is different from ours, and whose heroes we have hardly heard of. And it is that deadly sin of pride that makes people, otherwise intelligent, so sure that their own language, their own nation, their own politics, their own history, their own color, their own fashion, even their own cooking, are all the best in the world. When then this kind of provincialism takes hold of a Church, that Church is on its way into a dead-end street. The Great Parade is finished for a provincial Church.

(ii)

The next common characteristic Christians must try to avoid, as common as provincialism, is *sectarianism*. Note that part of the reason for sectarianism is provincialism. "Our Presbyterian Church here on East Avenue is better than that Roman Catholic parish down the street." That's a quote—not

of anyone in particular!—and it is a sectarian statement. Whether it happens in any particular case to be true or not, such a sectarian statement is always partly dependent on provincial ignorance.

Sectarianism, therefore, continues often long after the theological controversies and differences which divided us in the past have been forgotten by or have become irrelevant to both parties to a dispute. Let us take an example that has not only divided Protestants from Roman Catholics, but also Presbyterians from Lutherans, Anglo-Catholics from low Church Episcopalians, not to mention Calvinist Presbyterians from Zwinglian Presbyterians. This issue has to do with the theology of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the theology of communion.

Protestants in the 16th Century were sure that the Catholic position was pure magic. It appeared to Protestants that Catholics believed that if a properly ordained Priest, in good standing with his Bishop, said the right words and did the right actions, at the right time, bread and wine were actually changed into the body and blood of Christ right there on the Altar. What is more (and this is worse), it didn't make any difference whether either Priest or people had any faith at all. That is by definition *magic*—but no theologically literate Roman Catholic today, or probably even in the 16th Century, would accept what I just said was his understanding of Roman belief about the Sacrament.

On the other hand, Roman Catholics were sure that none of the Protestants really believed that anything objective happened in the consecration of the Sacrament. Our Sacrament was, they

held, merely a memorial. But Calvinists, Lutherans, and most Anglicans never would accept such a downgrading of the Lord's Supper in our Churches.

What is the situation today? Most of us no longer believe that magic is the great danger in the Roman Catholic Mass. What is more, we have been listening to the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches explaining their "Catholic" understanding of the liturgy and we find that their position is in some respects closer to the Roman position and in other respects closer to Calvinism. So we find that the ecumenical movement pushes us all as we become acquainted with each other in the smaller world, pushing us all to give up the sectarianism of all our pasts if we would be and remain in the mainstream of the Christian Church.

### (iii)

The third common characteristic Christians must try to avoid in order to be mainline Christians is *bad budgeting* of both our money and our time. I don't need to say very much about this because we are all familiar with budgets. Budgets are important because they reveal most clearly the values and the goals of a family or of a Church. Look at a Church budget. (By the way, I know nothing about the budget of this Church or of the budgets of the families sitting before me.) But these are questions. How does the Christian Education budget compare with the car allowances of the Staff? How does the budget for the care of this beautiful building compare with the expenditure last year for service to the local poor, hungry, or homeless? Or how does your whole local

budget (current expenses, we used to call it) compare with what you spend for causes farther away sponsored by Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly?

I might say that these questions are much easier to ask than they are to answer. But one thing we should note, all of us: the more money a Church has, the easier the answers come, but the greater danger that they will be the wrong answers.

So it is with budgeting our time. The more leisure we have, the more choice we have in what we will do. Poor people, like poor churches, must of necessity spend greater percentages of their time and money for necessities. Food and rent, for a family; and for a Church, a higher percentage for the Minister's salary, and to heat the building (in Rochester, anyway).

So then if we want to be in the Great Parade of Faith we must avoid provincialism and sectarianism. The budgets of our time and money will reveal how well we are doing.

## II

But now more briefly, but no less important, let me try to suggest three positive qualities of the life of any Church which would march forward in the Great Parade of Faith in the mainline that has a future as well as a tradition.

### (i)

First of all, a mainline Church is biblical. Important as is the Bible both as ground and inspiration of our faith, it does not simply and easily guide and inspire us. I can illustrate this from my experience in the twenty years from 1952 to 1972 which I spent listening to



and conferring with representatives of all the major Churches throughout the world. In those twenty years I never found a single representative of a single Church who was willing to admit that the position which he or his Church took was unbiblical. At first this surprised me greatly for I had been taught that Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox laid great stress on tradition while we Protestants were the ones who depended on the Bible alone—"sola scriptura."

(ii)

If then it is a fact that all Christian Churches (mainline Churches, anyway) depend upon the Scriptures for their faith and life, it is important that we know *how to read and interpret the Bible*.

Many years ago I was on a religious radio program down in Alabama. It was one of those programs where listeners were invited to question the guest by telephone. I remember a woman called who asked in a sort of sharp voice, "Do you really believe the Bible?" I meekly said, "Yes." But she didn't believe me. She went on, "I mean from cover to cover. Do you believe every word of it?" At that point I decided to ask her a question. I said, "You practice foot washing in your Church, don't you?" She sputtered, "No, we don't wash feet in Church. What has that got to do with believing the Bible?" I then told her that if she believed every word of the Bible, and took everything literally, she would have to practice footwashing because the Bible says so.

I am sure I didn't persuade her, but I nevertheless tell the story after all these years because the chief problem

in interpreting the Bible is to learn what should be taken literally and what is nonsense when it is taken literally, and that is the main job of the educational program of any Church. To know what God is saying to us and to all his people through the Bible, you must know the language and culture of the writer of each passage you want to interpret, and that of the particular people to whom he is writing. Further, you must know what kind of literature he produced. Is it history, a short story, a fable, or a myth or a poem? Then you ask why did the writer write it and what was he hoping it would mean to his first readers? And last of all, we ought to ask, "What then is God saying to us in this passage today?"

If you agree that that is the way we ought to interpret the Bible and use it as our authority in the Church, you come immediately to my second important positive quality for a Church with a future, which is to be willing to use your mind along with your piety and commitment. The intellectual leadership of both ministers and lay people is vital to a living Church. You must use your mind to ascertain the facts and then use it further to find out what the facts mean. Presbyterians have a good tradition in this regard. John Calvin was one of the best minds in the 16th century. And he used it. He studied the eastern fathers as well as the western. He was a lawyer and a layman, before he became a minister. Our immediate forebears, the Scots Presbyterians, had the same tradition from John Knox who studied under Calvin in Geneva. Even though Scotland was a poor country, it soon became the most literate country in Eu-

rope. Knox insisted that everybody must learn to read in order to read the Bible. No longer were they peasants. The best of them became elders in the Kirk.

And our fathers brought that tradition here. I am old enough now to note how our Church and tradition has changed, not always for the better, in the past fifty or sixty years.

Most of you are not old enough to remember the fundamentalist controversy in the early twenties. How many of you know that William Jennings Bryan ran for Moderator of our General Assembly as a fundamentalist who held, as the Scopes trial later showed, you could not believe in evolution because the Bible says the universe was made in six days? In fact, he held to Archbishop Usher's chronology that creation was finished in the year 4004 BC—at about three in the afternoon, if I remember rightly.

There was a sharp controversy that lasted ten years or more because our Church decided for an *intelligent* interpretation of the Bible. Upstate New York was rather important in this, I might remind you. The Auburn Affirmation was the opportunity where leadership against the then right came out and it came out because it centered in the Auburn Seminary. In a few years the majority of Presbyterians thought they had won the battle over ignorance in our Church. The extreme fundamentalist had left it or been disciplined out of it. The twenty years from 1938-1958 was one of the great periods of our history, marked by a number of things: Let me just mention them now, one by one. A new curriculum in the Church School. Do you know why they had a new curricu-

lum? Because the International Council of Christian Education that did the uniform lessons refused to recognize that there were two Isaiahs. Because they decided to teach the Book only and not the person, we decided that was nonsense. Everybody knew it who had been to Seminary—whether they would preach it in their pulpit or not. The national support of theological education in the seminaries had always been left to people of wealth to give what money there was for seminaries, and there wasn't enough. The establishment of *Presbyterian Life* magazine reached at its peak a circulation of over a million in a church of about two million in members. That was something. The Men's movement. I spent two months every winter as Stated Clerk traveling from Chicago to Los Angeles, and from wherever to New York to men's meetings all over, learning about their churches. A great program of visitation evangelism was launched where people all over who never thought they would do it—I know I was a pastor just before this in Albany and we knew that those people wouldn't go visiting people—but they did! It was Arthur Adams of Rochester who was pastor there then, and he saw that they did. This was the time of the establishment of the National Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches. This was the time of the letter to Presbyterians which hit the front page of the *New York Times* in which our Church, along with the U.S. Army alone, dared to take on Sen. McCarthy at the height of his power. An odd combination.

But while all these good things were going on, somehow, somewhere the intellectual life of Presbyterian minis-

ters began to deteriorate. Was it TV which stopped our reading? I do know that our Church needs better intellectual leadership, lay and ministerial, if it is to have a future. And don't be afraid of those who make nonsense popular.

(iii)

Finally, the third quality of the life of a mainline church which has a future is *prophetic* rather than *priestly*. The central meaning of the Bible in the Old and New Testaments is found in the long struggle between priest and prophet, between ethical, moral emphasis and sacerdotal, between religious identification with the poor and religious identification with the estab-

lishment. I do not need to say more. Simply this: nothing is surer to lead a Church into a dead-end street than for it to devote itself to comforting and protecting the establishment.

I conclude my sermon then by repeating my text which I read at the beginning and have not referred to until now. I want to remind you in closing that no Church is perfect nor are any of the saints. But the apostle says to us today: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

That is the way to the future strength of the Church of Jesus Christ.

### PRAYER

Almighty and ever blessed God, who art the Father of our spirits and the Lord of everlasting life, we bend before thee in this present hour with words of gratitude on our lips and a full measure of devotion in our hearts. We thank thee for each new call to service, for the privilege of claiming thy goodness, and especially for the joy of witnessing to the Word of truth in and through thy name. We bless thee for him in whose name we serve and that he came not only to bring a Gospel but that through his life we might have a Gospel to preach. We thank thee for the sound witness of countless Christian men and women, through whose devotion and labor the knowledge of thy salvation has reached the farthest boundaries of the earth.

We remember at this time with joy and loyal gratitude this seat of learning and the long line of benefactors and supporters who have enriched through their dreams and hopes and prayers the work of thy kingdom here.

Especially this evening we would claim thy promise and blessing for Richard Armstrong whom we have installed into this new and responsible chapter in his ministry. Give him constant appreciation of the rich harvest of thought the pioneers of our common faith have passed on to him. Make sensitive his concern daily for all who seek to learn, and may the investment of his time in study and students bring satisfaction and fulfillment in its train. Enlarge his vision to be commensurate with the evangel he proclaims, and possess him not only with thy purpose but with a sincere restlessness that touches the larger job yet to be done.

Help us as colleagues to share with him our favor and, united in spirit with the Master, Jesus Christ, may this school, through its administration, faculty, and students, become an ever more fruitful servant of thy church. Keep us all true to thee in the sunshine and shadow, in times of academic heaviness and in those high moments of success, and grant that in all our works—begun, continued and ended in thee—we may glorify thy holy name. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, we ask it. Amen.

(Prayer offered by Professor Donald Macleod during Inauguration of Professor Richard S. Armstrong).

# At Ease in Space

A Sermon

by STANLEY D. WALTERS

*A native of Kansas, the Rev. Stanley D. Walters is an alumnus of Greenville College, Ill., Princeton Theological Seminary, and Yale University (Ph.D. '62). He served pastorates in New Jersey and Connecticut before joining the faculty at Greenville College, and later Central Michigan University. Since 1976 he has been professor of Old Testament language and literature at Knox College, Toronto, Canada. This sermon was delivered in the Chapel of Princeton University on November 16, 1980.*

## Psalm 8

A South American playboy went to New York City to open a boutique for men. Things did not move as swiftly as he expected, and he complained, "In Argentina, I say 'I'm Luis Palacio,' and I get everything I want. In New York, I say, 'I'm Luis Palacio,' and they say, 'Spell it.'"

You are not surprised at that, for you too have sometime moved from a small circle where you were well-known, to a large one where you were unknown. It can be a painful experience. I know a student who had been a star hockey player and cornettist in a small town. At the university, he discovered that he was unnoticed and unknown, and it was months before he began to feel at ease in his new setting. I suppose this is why proverbial wisdom teaches us that it is better to be a big frog in a little pond than a little frog in a big pond.

But you don't always get to choose your pond. For example, we have had no choice but to discover that we live in a cosmos whose extent is so vast that we can't even think up ways to make the numbers meaningful to us. Consider those scientists who set up communication with beings elsewhere in the universe—if any exist. They not

only listen for signals from intelligent beings in outer space, they also beam signals to the stars in hope of reception and response. They do have one problem: even though radio signals travel at the speed of light, the nearest star is so far away that it will take years—literally—for our message to reach it. It would be more years for a response to be returned. We can ask questions of outer space if we want to, but the universe is so large that only our grandchildren will get the answers!

It turns out that we are very small frogs indeed, in a strange and shoreless sea and we may wonder how we can ever feel at home in that kind of space.

One night in the middle twenties the poets Edward Arlington Robinson and Stephen Vincent Benet were returning to a New Hampshire colony after seeing a movie in town. Walking through the night, Robinson looked at the sky and said, "There's something about those stars that mystifies and humiliates me more and more as I grow older. They keep making me suspect that it doesn't make a damn bit of difference whether I finish the poem I am writing or not."

Sometimes the reaction is more than discomfort, for a sense of insignificance



may lead to despair or even cynicism. A few years ago the valedictorian at an eastern university announced to his graduation audience that he felt no sense of accomplishment in his successful college career. "Take pity on me," he said, "those of you who can justify the air you breathe. Send me letters and tell me why life is worth living." He was an Ivy League math and computer science major, and presumably had a promising career ahead of him, but he claimed that he rejected his graduate school offers, "... because I could not worship black ink on white paper. I have made no plans because I have found no plans worth making."

To be sure, the university has changed somewhat in mood since those despairing words were spoken, but anxiety about the significance of life has not really abated. Robert Penn Warren has lately published verse making the same point. His image is that of a telephone ringing, with no answer.

That telephone keeps screaming its  
little black heart out:

*Nobody there? Oh, nobody's there!*  
—and the blank room bleeds

For the poor little black bleeding  
heart of the telephone.

I too have suffered. I know how it  
feels

When you scream and scream, and  
nobody's there.

For Warren, I think, the loneliness is more than social, it is cosmic. "I tell you," he says,

because I know you will under-  
stand.

I know you have screamed: *Nobody  
there? Oh, nobody's there!*

You've looked up at stars' lost in  
blankness that bleeds

Its metaphysical blood, but not of  
redemption.

So the telephone is a symbol of human existence. And the poet's conclusion is even more bleak than that of the Ivy League valedictorian, for in the last line Warren wonders

... why, long since, it's not been  
disconnected.

An extreme statement, perhaps, but, for all that, one that most of us understand. We all have our space. We live in different spaces, beginning with one the size of our own skin. Who has never said, "Is anybody there?" Who has never wondered, "Is there really any point?"

The Old Testament lesson for today is in resonance with some of these feelings. It speaks of the skies, the moon, the stars and then asks,

What is man that you are mindful  
of him,  
mortal man that you take note of  
him?

The writer, of course, knew nothing about modern astronomy and his mathematical knowledge of the universe was limited to the fact that you couldn't count the stars. But he had spent enough nights in the open to sense the bigness of the cosmos, and it had left him with a certain sense of insignificance. With his question, "What is man?" he begins to sound rather like Luis Palacio upon reaching New York City.

In fact, the psalmist uses two words for "man" which are not very common in the Hebrew Bible. From a number of possible synonyms he picks just those which suggest smallness, weakness and frailty.

You can almost hear someone saying, "Man? Would you mind spelling that, please?"

The question in the psalm seems so contemporary, so post-modern in its realism about human existence, that we expect the writer to end up with a kind of post-modern cynicism as well. The astonishing thing is that he does not. In spite of all that makes human existence seem small and meaningless, he boldly affirms,

You have made him little less than  
divine

you adorn him with glory and  
majesty.

You have made him master over  
your handiwork,  
laying the world at his feet.

That's the way you spell it in Psalm 8:  
M-A-S-T-E-R.

The difference between the biblical perspective and the secular perspective could hardly be greater.

[1] Nobody's there. Why haven't I long since been disconnected? Compare: You have made him but little less than divine.

[2] I made no plans because I found no plans worth making. Or: You have made him master over your handiwork.

[3] It doesn't make a damn bit of difference whether I finish this poem or not. Compare: You have laid the world at his feet.

I state the contrast sharply, although the psalmist does not do so. He makes no attempt to state or confront a problem view, and his psalm is not an *argument* intended to convince someone that life has meaning. It is, simply, an *affirmation* expressing the Biblical faith. But a faith so strong calls for our

attention; what is it that can make such a difference?

I can summarize it this way: the psalmist is saved from cynicism and pessimism because his faith in God helps him to think well of himself. Here is how he spells it out: he believes that behind human existence, there is a personal creator who cares about people and has given them a share in His own work. I want to look briefly at his kind of faith and this kind of confidence.

### (i)

First . . . we may think well of ourselves because human life has been created by God as the apex of creation. You know that in Genesis 1, human life comes on the sixth and last day of creation, as the eighth and last creative act. Its distinctiveness is asserted by a process of *addition*. Psalm 8 makes the same assertion by the process of subtraction: people are said to fall but little short of the divine. If you ascend from base zero, it is a long way up to human beings; if you descend from perfection, they are the first thing you come to. Mathematically, I suppose, it comes to the same thing, since 0 plus 6 is the same as 7 minus 1, but psychologically, Psalm 8 is making the more dramatic assertion. Indeed, the psalm's assertion is so bold that the history of its interpretation knows various attempts to tone it down, including one many of you will remember from the King James version, which reads,

Thou has made him a little lower  
than the angels.

In fact, the Hebrew text does not say "angels" but "God," and the substitu-

tion was the result of misguided reverence which felt that God's transcendence was threatened by the psalmist's words. He toned them down a little, thinking that you might spell "man" A-N-G-E-L, but never, of course, G-O-D!

But then, what happened on the sixth day of creation is really a long time ago and we have plenty of data to show that people in our own day have not acted very well. Perhaps the mathematics of character would require a different calculus in our own day. Even 7 minus 2 would bring it down to the fifth day of creation. There we find, as the King James version quaintly puts it, "Every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth," otherwise known as snakes . . . a word that has indeed sometimes been used of people!

But not so our psalm, for in the same breath as, "You made him little less than divine" (completed action), it says, "You adorn him with glory and majesty" (uncompleted action). There is still something good. What God made in primeval time, still in historical time somehow reflects his glory. A person is still a good thing to be.

A little boy who used to live in our house once announced that he would like to be a dog. The advantage, as seen by a five-year-old, was that after taking a bath, you don't need a towel; you can simply shake yourself dry.

That little boy is now in university. He is still using a bath towel . . . and he does a lot of other things that dogs can't do as well. He writes poetry, he plays the saxophone, he is kind to children, he is a philosophy major, he thinks he is in love, he prays . . . he's a person.

If you can confess the biblical idea of

creation and live accordingly the life of the mind and the spirit, you can be at ease in space.

(ii)

Second, we may think well of ourselves because God pays attention to people. If the Creator was present at creation, he is also present to people today. "You are mindful of them," we hear. "You take note of them." These are verbs rich in biblical associations and overtones. The first is simply "to remember," and occurs frequently in Scripture with God as its subject. God has a memory. In the present, he knows what he did in the past. He remembers creation, so to speak; he recalls his covenant with his people and is guided accordingly.

"He takes note." The word means "to attend to with care," and is sometimes translated, "to visit." God's memory is balanced by his action. The Old Testament contains so much narrative precisely because it was important to show how God had actually come to his people, over and over again, expressing in action his loyalty to his promise. He visited his people in the days of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Jeremiah.

No doubt it is encouraging to hear this, but I know that we still often feel that God is more conspicuous today by his absence than by his presence. With Will Barrett, in Walker Percy's last novel *The Second Coming*, we often want to call out,

No more *deus absconditus*!

Come out, come out, wherever you are, the game's over.

Christians know how the New Testament picks up these twin themes of

recollection and attentiveness. They come together nicely, for example, in the hymn of praise offered by the father of John the Baptist after the forerunner's birth. The father is Zechariah, whose name in Hebrew means, "The Lord remembers." He said,

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his  
people.

There is more in our past than the Exodus. There is Jesus Christ, in whom God was at work fulfilling his ancient promises and coming in judgment and grace to his people. Just as a royal visit confers importance on the host people, so we know there must be meaning in human existence if God has stepped out of the circle of eternity, walked among people a person, to suffer and die as one of us. This is the heart of the good news in the Gospel: He remembers . . . he takes note. In the risen Christ God continues to meet us, pointing beyond our failures to the new creation which each one of us may become.

If you can confess the biblical idea of redemption, and share accordingly in a life from beyond yourself, you can be at ease in space.

### (iii)

The third idea is that we should think well of ourselves because of the role God has given to us. The larger part of this psalm is devoted to the natural world. It speaks first of the heavens as the work of God's fingers, and then in the last half it describes the earthly world as the work of God's hands.

But there are two different verbs

used for our relationship to these two worlds.

For the skies, we read, "When I behold . . ." Observation is really all that is open to us. We cannot control the heavens; we must be content to let the stars move in their orbits. The remarkable explorations of Mars and Saturn have not really changed this.

But of our own world, the psalm says, "You have made people rule over your handiwork, laying the world at their feet." Here God has shared with us some of his own sovereignty. The psalm is very bold about this. It is not a matter of being queen or king for a day. God regards his people as sovereigns for life.

He has delegated to us responsibility over the world we live in. It is a true con-dominium, in which we are co-regents with Him in its administration . . . Dual owners . . . Co-executives. Not only is life not an accident, we hear in our psalm, it is part of God's long-range plan. And, if it is not too bold a thing to say of the uncreated God, we hear our psalm intimating that God needs us.

Professor Paul Weiss used to teach a course called "Nature, Man and God." One semester after the class had lingered long over the first of those terms, he sought to get the course moving. "Come on, come on," he said one day. "We've got other fish to fry, namely, man and God."

It is so with Psalm 8. It is not really about nature, but about people and God. There is work he wants us to do.

I do not think this will help anyone decide whether to go into medicine or law, business or education, architecture or agriculture, all of which can be broadly understood as administration



of the natural order. No. The entire world lies at your feet. But it does tell us that there is work to do and a way to do it. God's call credits us with the ability to organize his world, to live in it, to be responsible for it. If we blow it up or otherwise return it to chaos, through the processes of decreation which are now available to us, it will be because we have not thought well enough of ourselves in God's role for us.

If you can confess the biblical view of vocation and live accordingly a life of responsible service, you can be at ease in space.

(iv)

Does the sermon now begin to have a humanistic ring? People are good, God dignifies them by his attention, he assigns them the role of mastery over nature, they can save the world from chaos and destruction, the new generation—infants and sucklings—will correct our mistakes. . . .

The psalm is indeed bold, and we need to feel the force of that boldness. The music of the psalm reflects the harmonies of a world where all is well because people are what they ought to be. But there are two quick closing things which the psalm requires us to say about this.

One of them is that there is also a discordant note here, for verse 3 speaks of God's foes. There are antagonisms in God's world. How intrusive this theme is: infants and sucklings whose mouths are God's strength grow up to be enemies and adversaries. How much better for the rounded rhetoric of the theology of creation if that line were not here.

Indeed, some commentators have

wished to drop it altogether, both because it seems intrusive and because the reference to "infants and sucklings" is difficult to interpret. Finding the babies troublesome, as Professor Wilhelm Rudolf has recently remarked, they have followed in the steps of King Herod and killed them off.

But, no. The line is there, restraining any glib gospel that people as people can set right a hostile world. If you and I are in some sense God's solution, as the psalm implies, we are also the problem. We are part of the cure, and we are also the disease. The man, the woman, who is God's strength to still the enemy and the avenger, can be only the one who has been remembered and visited, the one being lifted by Christ's grace to the new life of the children of God.

The other thing to say is that although the psalm celebrates people and personhood, it also celebrates God. "Our Lord and Master," it says, "How great is your name in all the earth." This line opens and closes the psalm. The bag which contains the robust affirmation

"People fall but little short of the divine"

is closed at the neck with a drawstring which confesses the majesty of the sovereign Lord.

And this is the reason that the two views with which I began are so far apart. It is not just the bigness of the nighttime sky which makes the psalmist feel small; it is the God who has made that sky and all that fills it. It is not the emptiness of space which dwarfs him, it is its fulness: *Somebody's there*. If space is big, the Creator must be bigger; if the stars are many,

the Creator's power must be more manifold. That is the reason he says, "What is man?"

"How great is your name in all the earth." Opening and closing the psalm, this line encloses everything else in strong parentheses of affirmation. It is a creedal ascription, calling us to acknowledge our whole existence bracketed by God, by his reality and greatness. All that I do and am is enclosed and supported by him . . . by him who is the beginning and the end, whom we meet in Jesus Christ, the alpha and the omega.

There you have it. And it is a deep word which the psalmist speaks about

our lives. We can be at ease in space because of God and because of our standing as his own creation, because of his saving attention to us and to our needs, and because of the partnership in redemptive service to which he commissions us.

This is a Biblical faith, and it will sustain us even at the points of our greatest needs. Scripture calls us to join ourselves to this God, daringly to embrace this strong theology, and boldly to confess it in lives of worship and service.

You may put your call through, my friends. It will not go unanswered. God is there.

## TWO POEMS

### I. ANTHROPOLOGY

"I" am  
Myriad, a swarm  
A committee  
And a zoo  
I'm pluriform  
I am hot and  
Cold and warm  
And must figure  
"You" out  
Too?

### II. APOTHEOSIS

I place flowers  
On the altar  
Of my mind  
And bow to  
Reason  
Today, tomorrow  
In and out  
Of season  
The candle lit  
The litany goes on  
Until I see  
The sheer idolatry!

—William J. Schmidt  
St. Peter's College, Jersey City, NJ

# Subject, Subjects and Subjugation

A Sermon

by DANIEL C. DEARMENT

*An alumnus of the College of Wooster (A.D., 1955), Union Theological Seminary, N.Y. (B.D., 1958) and of Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M., 1966), Mr. DeArment is presently Chaplain Supervisor at the Presbyterian-University of Pennsylvania Medical Center. Formerly he served pastorates in Ohio and New Jersey. He serves also as a Supervisor in Clinical Training in the CPE program of Princeton Seminary.*

Fourth of July weekend.

The birthday of our nation. And here in

Lansdowne and Philadelphia and all over the country  
we have watched again "the rockets red glare  
the bombs bursting in air"

Each in his/her own way has given thanks  
and paid tribute for "the land of the free"

Now it is Sunday, and I would ask you once

again to reflect with me on an ancient and profound  
dilemma: the authority of God and the authority of  
the state: Are they in conflict? Which is higher?

When the Pharisees wanted to catch Jesus in a trap  
they tried to confound him with this very dilemma of  
authority?

And Paul writing to the church in  
Rome, and presumably to Roman citizens (as he was),  
speaks to the issue—

A review last Sunday in the Philadelphia Inquirer,  
on a book on authority says: "Some years ago, the late Hannah  
Arendt pointed out that the proper question to ask about the topic  
of authority would be not 'What is it?' but 'What was it?'"

So here we go, on a word study.

## I

The first word is *S-U-B-J-E-C-T*

"Subject," the verb, not the noun.

"To subject" is to put down

"To subject" is to overpower

"To subject" is to stand above another  
and keep them below you

"To subject" is to be human  
and to be sinful

Paul's great treatise on government in Chapter 13 can only be understood if we see it as part of his underlying theme in the book of Romans:

we are sinners in rebellion against  
God, against others, and against  
ourselves. . . . .

The only reasonable beginning point for understanding his teaching on authority is to confess that all of us, try as we might, do not acknowledge his words:

"there is no authority except from God."

We are the authority  
We are Number One  
We are the center of our own universe.

The way we live this out with others is to subject them in a thousand different ways—no exceptions  
please.

This happens individually,  
and it happens collectively.

Individually, we can, IF we are courageous  
and honest, see  
ourselves subjecting others.

[Try not, for a minute to think about  
how you are subjected, or put down]

Wives subject their husbands. . . .

Husbands subject their wives. . . .

Parents subject their children. . . .

Children and youth subject their parents. . . .

If you would understand tyranny,  
you don't need to read history,  
look to your own family  
and into your own heart.

There is the pride and the will to power which we ALL possess, and we ALL use—  
Collectively, we do need to look to history to see the way groups of people subject, put down,  
others. . . .



The history of most of Western Europe,  
 and of this country, is largely a history  
 of conquest—of the strong and  
 the many subjecting the weak,  
   the poor,  
   the few.

Usually we think of this in terms of  
 obvious misappropriation of power and  
 authority: colonialism in Africa,  
   slavery in the South,  
   nazi-ism in Germany,

In order to bring all this back  
 to you and me, remember that  
 subjecting other people  
 or subjecting an individual  
 has usually been done, not with  
 evil intent, but with the  
 most benevolent and loving  
   motives. . . .

It is when we play God, and  
 imagine ourselves good and worthy,  
 that we are most apt to  
 subject another to our will

“I did it for his own good. . . .”

“We know better than they what they need”

Yes, and it is not easy for us to  
 remember that slavery was  
 justified as God’s will and  
 documented in Scriptures. . . .

“For there is no authority, except from God”

We all forget this

We all abuse our personal  
 and collective authority. . . .

We stand together as sinners,  
 all of us. . . .

And therefore we need government.

This brings us to the second word.

## II

“Subjects”—the plural noun.

We are all subjects.

We are all citizens.

We cannot live together without  
a government of law any more than  
we could play a game of baseball  
without rules,  
and umpires.

“Let every person be subject to the  
governing authority” is Paul’s  
way of reminding us, not that  
governments are good, but that  
they are necessary. . . .

He does seem a bit naive though:  
“For rulers are not a terror to good conduct,  
but to bad. Would you have no fear of him  
who is in authority? Then do what is  
good and you will receive his approval. . . .”

How do you feel when a patrol car  
comes into your rear-view mirror? Sure you  
check the speedometer. . . . but why. . . .?

The presence of the law reminds us of  
our inclination to break the law,  
even though in fact we don’t.

And taxes?  
To be a subject is to be taxed.

Nobody likes to be taxed, but  
look at it this way, says Paul:

You pay taxes because governments  
are necessary. Governments are  
necessary because human beings  
are sinful. When you pay your  
taxes, you are paying, as it  
were, your dues to belong  
to the human race.

Or to bring it into Philadelphia,  
1980—somebody has to pay  
the umpire,  
and the rules  
committee!

Subject—what we do or try to do  
to others.

Subjects—what we all are, because  
of what we try to do,  
to each other.

## III

The third and final word is not in either lesson, but is necessary to round out a hopeful, even joyful understanding of the glory of God's ways with us,

and the greatness of the tradition of our own country.

The word is: Subjugate.

"To subjugate" is to put under the yoke.

There are two ways that subjugation can take place,  
two ways that you and I can be put under the yoke.

The first is the passive use of the verb: I am subjugated.  
I am forced to wear the yoke.

It was against this arbitrary and un-free subjugation that the revolution which founded our nation was mounted. And it has always been to throw off the yoke of imposed authority that free men and women everywhere have said:

"I will NOT be subjugated"  
"I will be free."

I will be free to decide whether or not I shall wear the yoke.

Which brings us to the second, and active use of the verb:

—I will subjugate myself  
—I will wear the yoke  
—I *choose* to wear it.

This active subjugation of self is at the same time what the 18th century founding fathers meant by a government of the people ("We choose to be governed.")

AND what the Christian faith  
has always taught was to be  
the only response to God's  
gracious invitation. . . .

"Take my yoke upon you, and  
learn of me," says the Lord,

"Take my yoke"—I will not force  
it on you—I will not subject  
you to it—

Choose you this day in  
freedom and in love.

What a glorious heritage is  
ours to live in a land where  
we are governed only by our  
consent—

What a glorious heritage is  
ours to worship together  
a God who wants absolutely  
nothing from us, unless we  
freely and openly bow  
and worship Him.

I can tie these two together  
in yet another way.

To love our country, as Christians, is  
probably best expressed  
when we love,  
the revolutionary spirit  
which strives to overthrow  
tyranny in all places,  
especially in our own  
tendencies to tyrannize  
and subject any other person  
to our will.

"For there is no authority  
except from God."



# The Righteousness of Joseph

Sermon by

JOHN H. MARKS

ONE of the little sung heroes of Christian faith is Joseph, the husband of Mary. The Bible mentions him only in passing, and were it not for the brief comment in St. Matthew's gospel, we would know only that he was a native resident of Nazareth, the husband of Mary, and that he probably died before Jesus' crucifixion. Otherwise the record is silent. To be sure, the Church has canonized him, and no scene of the Christian Nativity is complete without him. But our attention fixes usually on the baby in the manger, and on Mary his mother; for that is where the action is. Joseph is one of those decorative and seldom studied figures, who are seated or standing around the new-born child.

The arresting fact is that Joseph is there at all. He had been engaged to marry his relative Mary, who was perhaps his cousin; and their betrothal according to religious law had the legally binding force of marriage. And Mary was found to be pregnant. The law decreed that faithlessness on the woman's part carried the penalty of death, although the future husband, if he did not want to exact the full penalty of the law, could give his promised bride a bill of divorce. We can understand that Joseph, in love with Mary

*Since 1954 the Rev. John H. Marks has been on the faculty of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. A native of Denver, Colo., Dr. Marks is an alumnus of the University of Denver, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the University of Basel. He is the author of several books, including a translation of A Commentary on Genesis by Gerhard von Rad. During the First Semester 1980-81, Dr. Marks was on leave and served as acting Dean of the University Chapel, where this sermon was given on December 21.*

and assuming her to be in love with him, received with great distress the revolting news that she was carrying in her womb another's child. According to rabbinic assumption, pregnancy became evident three months after conception, and therefore widows and divorcees were required to wait three months after their separation from their earlier husbands before being married again. Joseph's anguish over the disclosure that his bride-to-be was pregnant, mocking as it did their love for each other, is cloaked in our lesson in the straightforward declaration that Joseph was a man of principle and would demand no harsh penalty for Mary's breach of faith, but could under the circumstances have nothing further to do with her. He was a kindly man, unwilling to subject his fiancée either to death or to public disgrace; but he was also a righteous man, unable now to accept her as his wife. He could not have known that she was "with child by the Holy Spirit," any more than Mary herself was prepared to accept the angel Gabriel's announcement that she, a virgin, would conceive and bear a son. Miracles are self-authenticating for those who accept them; and no force of persuasion will make them credible to the unbelieving. Talmudic law de-

finer a Jew as the child of a Jewish mother, because that's the sure side. Joseph knew that Mary's child would not be his.

Joseph's initial decision to send Mary away did not come easily. He made no impetuous move. He considered the matter thoughtfully and with heavy heart; and as so often happens to people under stress, he dreamed about it. Dreams have played a part in the life of mankind, though we do not yet understand the phenomenon of dreaming. In Jesus' day the rabbis were divided about the value they should attribute to dreams. Some considered them to have no value at all, while others thought them to be a weak form of prophecy. Among the latter group some thought that, just as there was true and false prophecy, so there could also be true and false dreams; every dreamer had to decide which dream was which. Some rabbis declared that everything depended on an accurate interpretation of the dream; uninterpreted dreams, they said, are like unread letters. But interpreted dreams would be fulfilled according to the way in which they were interpreted. It seems evident that the interpretation of dreams was neither definitive nor helpful.

Whatever we may think of dreams and their interpretation, our lesson tells us that Joseph apprehended in a dream the message that would become decisive for his life. "Joseph, son of David," it went, "do not be afraid to take Mary home with you as your wife. It is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She will bear a son; and you shall give him the name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." To understand the impor-

tance attached to names, we should realize that the Bible records only six persons to whom God gave names before they were born: Isaac (Gen. 17: 19), his half-brother Ishmael (Gen. 16: 11), the kings Solomon (I Chron. 22: 9) and Josiah (I Kings 13:2), John the Baptist (Luke 1:13), and Jesus (Matthew 1:21). Joseph was to take Mary, accept her child, and name him. The name Jesus is an abbreviated form of the Hebrew Joshua, which means "Yahweh (God) is salvation." The name came to Joseph as a revelation, for rabbinic speculation about Messiah's name had long been rife and inconclusive. Already we begin to sense something of the knowledge Joseph had of his people's history, of his faith in God's promise to redeem his people, and of his willingness to take his small part in the fulfillment of that promise. The heartbreaking news of Mary's pregnancy was, in spite of Joseph's anger and hurt and possible legal recourse, becoming an unlikely announcement of hope and joy.

"When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took Mary home to be his wife." In these decisive words the righteousness of Joseph emerges: he awoke from his dreaming and married Mary. With that act of faith and commitment he set the course of his life. Not that it made all that difference to anyone else! Mary would have borne her child, who no doubt would have accomplished his redemptive work without being brought up by Mary and Joseph. But speculation of this kind is fruitless, for Joseph, and not someone else, became Jesus' father; and Jesus became Joseph's son, not the son of someone else. Who can attach

proper significance to all the contingencies of history? Joseph's obedience to the command that he be courageous and marry Mary, despite his better judgment, is the focus of our attention this morning. What do we see?

## I

First, though his final decision was against his religious upbringing and moral sensibility, Joseph's love for Mary was stronger than his fear of what people would think when her child arrived early, or even than whatever he may have thought about what she had or had not done. He became persuaded that his own honor, legal tradition, and the public opprobrium that might be leveled against him for trying by marriage to rescue a woman from disgrace were not decisive characteristics for apprehending God's will. Public morality and legal tradition would have supported and applauded Joseph's decision to put Mary away; but Joseph had learned, however feebly and inchoately, that God works in mysterious ways—that truth is stranger than fiction, if you like; that love can not be measured, though it may be tested, by honor or public opinion or legal regulation. The angel did not tell Joseph to marry Mary, but rather that he should not fear to take her as his wife, if he indeed loved her; for God, not evil, was at work in her life. How could Joseph be sure of that? He could not be sure, then or ever. And that leap of trust is the first mark of his righteousness. As the ancient prophet once said of the childless Abraham to whom God promised descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven: he "believed God, and God reckoned it to him as righteousness."

All life is like that. Research and prudence, law and tradition, desire and courage play their necessary roles in helping us decide what to do. But in the end we fly by the seat of our own pants, hoping that our planning has been intelligent, our desires noble, and our faith true. If things turn out well, we know that it is by grace; and if they turn out badly, we know we have ourselves to blame. Probabilities give us some hope and stamina, but certainty is always the certainty of faith. We must decide if and whether we have heard God's word aright; and on that decision we stake our lives. Joseph's faith that God had spoken to him in and through this anguish of his life, and his decision to act on that word are the first marks of his righteousness.

## II

But far more was at stake here than Joseph's love for Mary, important and critical as that was. The angel had told Joseph what to name the baby: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." For Joseph to name the baby was to accept the child as his own; and for him to name the child Jesus, i.e., Savior, was to accept God's promise of redemption as being fulfilled in this child. All the longing of Israel for redemption found expression and fulfillment in that name. Who among us would dare predict the future significance of any of our infant children? We find it difficult enough to make some statement about the likelihood for our college graduates to make significant contributions to the nation or the world. But Joseph is asked to name Mary's child, Jesus, in the full expectation that Jesus would save his people from their sins.

Whether or not Joseph really had such grand hopes for the boy we can not say; but he did call him Jesus and took pains to see that he escape King Herod's slaughter of children two years old and under, and that he have a proper education in the synagogue.

For Joseph the prophetic promises about God's salvation of his people obviously meant something, otherwise the angel's word to him would have signified nothing. Joseph was living in expectation that God would reveal himself in power and mercy, making his glory known to a surprised and longing world. Joseph may even have had some notions about how that revelation would occur, but he was willing to abandon his own ideas in the expectation of Mary's child of promise. His marriage to Mary carried with it his own hope for the redemption of his people. What a conception of marriage! What a hope to treasure and nourish and live by!

Most of us, I suppose, are not so wildly optimistic. Our visions for our world are tamed by expediency or weariness or hopelessness. Tomorrow, we fear, is unlikely to be better than today, more likely to be worse. Our children will be lucky to have lives as good as ours; so we hang on in grim desperation. Joseph had no grand illusions either. Nothing in the Bible suggests that he ever spoke about his reasons for marrying Mary or for bringing up her child. But he did have hope, hope that carried him beyond the heartache and foreboding of his engagement to Mary to the coming deliverance of Israel. I am told that Ricardo Mestres, Princeton University's financial vice president and treasurer emeritus, was fond of advising his col-

leagues in their deliberations about possible courses of action for the University, "Little steps for little people!" That is excellent advice, but it depends for its value on the emergence of a worthy vision of the future. Joseph had that essential, worthy and lively vision. It is the second mark of his righteousness.

### III

Finally, we read of Joseph that "he took Mary home to be his wife, but had no intercourse with her until her son was born. And he named the child Jesus." That long wait until the child was born must be seen as a third mark of Joseph's righteousness. However he may have understood or intended his behavior, Joseph was living out the consequences of taking the pregnant Mary home to be his wife. He accepted in faithfulness and patience the obligations as he perceived them of his decision to be her husband. Everything we read about him, little as it is, reinforces the perception that Joseph was a prudent husband and father, looking out intelligently and vigilantly for the safety and welfare of Mary and Jesus. What we infer here is the daily routine of a diligent and devoted spouse, who in fidelity to his marriage commitment does not look backward or pretend to be more or less than he is. He gives love and hope a chance by his steadfast commitment to his promise. We have here the long walk of the believer, humbly and willingly obedient till the time be fulfilled. And when the child is born, Joseph names him Jesus.

The righteousness of Joseph is perhaps less spectacular than the faithful submission of Mary, but it is nonetheless moving in its simple fidelity. Joseph



reveals the life of faith, from the moment of his encounter with anxiety, through the difficult hours of his decision, and into the protracted patience and restraint of living with his choice. What he knew of the outcome of his

venture was only a wild surmise; he did not live to see his son's last days, and even if he had, his faith would still have been severely tested. He believed, and God reckoned that to him as righteousness.

## PRINCETON CEMETERY

Walking past the cemetery

*still*

Imagic in its headstone stance  
and magic—the impression of its spirits:  
I thought of all those ghosts

*still*

floating free through cultivated yard and tree.  
A score of years ago I climbed that iron fence  
(to keep the people out, not spirits in),  
Saw Edwards, Witherspoon and Burr—

It was winter then;

Today the trees were lovers to the wind.

And I, a student

*still*

Gazed at that somnolent repose  
while climbing fences of my Self  
to meet my spirits—floating free.  
Imagine,

*still*

Rising from their ground.

They do not haunt but

beckon to a resurrection dance.

I will gladly take their hand,

and when the celebration plays through to solstice night

I will walk by summer light through fences iron to their will—

By grace in spaces in between . . .

And join again the people in their race,

Conversant

*still*

In language from the market place.

—Robert B. Stuart, PTS '62

# Hoping Against Hope\*

Sermon by  
HORTON M. DAVIES

*Since 1956, the Rev. Horton M. Davies has been H. W. Putnam Professor of Religion at Princeton University and on alternate years a visiting lecturer in Liturgies at Princeton Theological Seminary. A native of South Wales, Dr. Davies is an alumnus of the University of Edinburgh and Oxford University. He served a parish in South London prior to academic appointments at Rhodes University, South Africa, and Mansfield College, Oxford. Widely known as a lecturer and scholar, he is the author of eight books including the five-volume definitive study, *Worship and Theology in England* (Princeton University Press).*

Text: "(Abraham) *who in hope believed against hope to the end that he might become a father of many nations*"  
(Romans 4:18).

"**H**OPING against hope"—you have heard the phrase often enough, and you may well know even the experience of trying to be an optimist when pessimism seems more sensible. "Hoping against hope" is the faint hope of the cancer patient when he receives his first cobalt treatment. Or, it is the pale expectation of the university undergraduate, who has little confidence in herself when she reads the initial compulsory question in her first examination. "Hoping against hope" is humanity in the culture of today with its gaping, God-shaped blank, and what is left but to whistle in the dark to keep one's spirits up? Or, it is this minister preaching about the Christian hope of resurrection from the dead in England's greatest repository of the famous dead. But—and this is far more important—it was from this very situation that originally the community of faith was created, and from the experience of hoping against hope that Abra-

ham became the first of the people of God.

St. Paul reminds us in the 4th chapter of his *Letter to the Romans* that when Abraham was a very old man with Sarah, his barren wife, he was given the apparently ludicrous promise that he should be the father of many nations and his seed would be more numerous than the grains of sand on the seashore. Here is St. Paul's interpretation of this seminal passage: "Abraham . . . *who in hope believed against hope* . . . considered his own body as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but grew strong in trust, giving glory to God, and *being fully assured that what God had promised he was fully able to perform*" (Rom. 4:18-21).

Now before I invite you to hope against hope, I must in all honesty warn you how much against the stream of contemporary thought you must

\* Sermon preached at Evensong in Westminster Abbey, London, England.

swim in order to gain the shores of the Christian hope.

You must swim against the engulfing black sea of contemporary nihilistic existentialism and against the sweeping red sea of revolutionary hopes.

## I

The existentialists are most brilliantly represented by the great French trio, Camus, Sartre and Sagan. Camus has written, among other works, *The Pest* (a novel about a plague that strikes a north African town) and *The Stranger* and *The Fall*. Each shows man as the frustrated victim of circumstances too great for him to control. And their author himself with tragic irony died in an automobile accident. Jean-Paul Sartre conveys his nihilism perfectly in the title of his play about Hell here on earth, entitled, *No Exit*. And Françoise Sagan has admirably caught the mood in her novel, *Bonjour Tristesse* (*Welcome Sadness*). The Christian hope has been considered by them and written off as mere dreaming, sheer fantasy in cloud-cuckoo-land. They consider the world as a concentration camp and the task of moderately decent men and women is to improve the living conditions for the next batch of prisoners. Their creed is perfectly summed up in the warning of Albert Camus: "Our task is to think hard *and not to hope*." In the brevity of a sermon I can only say that they know the Cross experience but not the Resurrection, the Fall of Man but not the Ascension of Man through the "Second Adam [who] to the fight and to the rescue came," and that they understand "Bonjour Tristesse" but not "Adieu Tristesse" (Farewell Sadness) and "Hail gladdening

Light. . . ." Theirs is a brave Stoicism, a philosophy by which to die, but not a philosophy by which to live. The way of despair is the way of suicide, but the way of hope is the way of life.

## II

The second group cannot be convicted of despair, but can be criticized from the Christian standpoint of presumption and impatience. They cannot wait for God to bring in his Kingdom and City; they will anticipate him and establish the classless society. As Moltmann has reminded us: the existentialists picture man as the classical Sisyphus doomed forever to roll a huge stone wheel up a hill which forever falls back on him; whereas the Marxists and utopian idealists look to the heroic figure of Prometheus, who stole fire from heaven to improve the human lot.

One can understand the impatience that lies behind this view. It was that of the poor man in the mission hall who was sick of being only promised a heavenly crown at the long and bitter end of his deprived life, and he interrupted the preacher with his cockney wit and cried, "O, for Gawd's sake, guvnor, give us 'alf a crown now." But we have seen so many revolutions followed by tyrannies: the France of 1789 led to the Napoleonic dictatorship; and Moscow's was succeeded by the betrayal of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. But Christian hope is not based on human social justice though it is not contrary to it, and indeed hopes for it, under the renovating power of God. But, when all is said and done, the way of revolution is to be faulted in two ways: it grossly underestimates the

power of God and grievously overestimates the power of untransformed human justice and love. As I rejected the despair of the existentialists and nihilists, so I also reject the presumption and God-playing Titanism of the revolutionaries.

What, then, are the grounds for Christian hope?

### III

(i) The first and greatest ground of the Christian hope is the *firmness of a promising and performing God*. Zechariah could speak of the Jews exiled in Babylon and far from their native lands of Judah and Israel as "the prisoners of hope." Yes, and that Messianic promise was fulfilled in Christ Jesus, whom St. Paul called the "Yes" and "Amen" to God's promises. Abraham was justified in believing that "what God had promised he was fully able to perform."

(ii) The second basis of trust in the Christian hope is the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ* from the dead. Listen to the serene assurance in the words of I Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has caused us to be reborn into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." "Wish fulfillment," you murmur beneath your breath. I deny it. When the disciples had seen Jesus crucified and buried they thought the Christian enterprise was over. They barricaded themselves behind closed doors and windows. They were the very image of black despair, afraid that a knock at the door would mean Roman soldiers taking them to their trial and probable crucifixion. Only the visitation of the risen Christ can explain the transformation of this de-

feated remnant into the spearhead of the noble army of martyrs. In Jerusalem—the place of defeat for him personally—Peter proclaimed the victorious truth, "This Jesus whom you crucified, God hath made both Lord and Christ." God had promised that his Holy One should not see corruption—and he kept his promise—and hence despair fled from the disciples like mists escaping from the morning sun.

(iii) The third ground for hope is the *balance it gives to human life*. My former teacher, Dr. Nathaniel Micklem, former Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, once put it this way: "Because of the Cross we can never be facile optimists, but because of the Resurrection we can never be deep pessimists." We are, therefore, Christian *realists* who have plumbed the depths and know the heights of human possibilities. This Christian hope is, indeed, a stabilizing anchor in the storms of life, and it means most assuredly that those who die in the Lord are forever Christ's. That is a conviction that is not only bracing but infinitely cheering because there are no limits to the preserving and providing love of God in Christ.

(iv) Lastly, it is *in the strength of Christian hope that God's greatest saints and servants have lived and have been sustained*. Let me mention only one of them, to whom the Church of England owes so much in its High Church Revival in the year 1833 onwards, that blessed man John Keble. His great sermon on "National Apostasy" started the Oxford Movement



which returned reverence to divine worship throughout the English-speaking world and beyond. In the autumn of the year he went up as a freshman to Oxford University, and of course the journey was then by stage coach. He chose to remain outside, bundled up from the cold, and sitting behind the coachman with the horses immediately below. He fell asleep on his high perch and suddenly realized his danger as the coach rattled on the cobblestones of Oxford's High Street. For one moment that seemed an eternity, he thought he would slip beneath the coach's wheels and be crushed to death, and then he realized that the strong arm of the coachman was about him. He said afterwards, when he became

a national figure, that he never thought of the great words of the Book of Deuteronomy that "underneath are the everlasting arms" of God, without interpreting them by the illustration of the coachman. They kept him from despair often when he was dispirited and downhearted, especially as he recalled that God made the instrument of torture, the Cross, into the Supreme symbol of reconciliation and redemption, and the very grave not a terminus but a tunnel to heaven.

So, like Abraham, we have good grounds for "hoping against hope."

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

#### NEVER RIGHT

"The parsons' heads are in the clouds!  
There really is a dearth  
Of sermons that are practical  
And bring us down to earth.  
They prate about theology  
And dull dogmatic stuff,  
With mystical embellishments  
And other-worldly bluff.  
They rave about the Love of God  
To us who toil and labour;  
*Why can't they give some good advice  
On how to love your neighbour?"*

A vicar, hearing this complaint,  
Which touched him on the raw,  
Dilated on the second great  
Commandment of the Law.  
He spoke of Christian fellowship,  
And social equity;  
Of justice and of brotherhood,  
And selfless charity.  
But still his people criticized  
(He found it very odd.)  
*"Why can't he take the Good Old Book,  
And preach the Love of God?"*

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# The Transforming Friendship

A Sermon

by JOHN H. VALK

Text: II Corinthians 5:19 (TEV)

**L**AST year a national magazine did a cover story on the religious phenomenon of people who claim to be "born again." As you know, the range of people proclaiming this experience runs from presidents to plumbers. You may know some of them. Chuck Colson, a very special kind of plumber, wrote a personal book on the subject.

Undoubtedly some people are having remarkable life-changing experiences. So many say they are "born again" that one would guess that this description of coming to faith permeates the Bible; it does not. The concept is not mentioned in the Old Testament and introduced just once in the New.

You recall that Jesus used the idea of being born again in his conversation with Nicodemus and spoke of it as a requirement for him to see the Kingdom of God. He used it as an appropriate, powerful verbal image to help a man whose status and piety were preventing him from recognizing his need for radical, spiritual surgery. A man whose dignity and pride apparently motivated him to come to Jesus in the nighttime to ask his questions. An open interview in the daylight would be certain to reveal to his followers that he did not have all the answers to life's perplexing questions. Jesus' response to him was: "You must be born again."

*A native of New Jersey, the Rev. John H. Valk is an alumnus of Houghton College, Princeton Theological Seminary, and studied also at New College, Edinburgh. After parish work in New Jersey and New York, he became Chaplain at the Correctional and Reception Center, Elmira, NY. This sermon was given before the Presbytery of Geneva and speaks out of his present vocational experience.*

The message was, "If you want to see God's rule in your life, Nicodemus, you're going to have to experience something which God puts there, not just something you've put there with all your wisdom and self-righteousness."

W. B. Yeats in his autobiography sheds light on this insight of Jesus when he writes: "One of their errors is continually to mistake a philosophical idea for a spiritual experience. The very preoccupation of the intellect with the soul destroys that experience."

It appears that only this once did Jesus use the concept of being born again to help a person. He had such an amazing comprehension of the spiritual and human condition of people that he always had a tailor-made response or message for everyone. However, once he did a similar thing when he took a child and placed it within a circle of people and said: "Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

## *Perceptiveness of Jesus*

Jesus had an immediate perception of each individual person he met. Remember his first contacts with his disciples? His winning encounter with Peter and Andrew consisted of some practical fishing directions from the vantage point of the shoreline and the

offer of an adventure to come with him and learn to "catch men" instead of fish. To Levi, the tax collector, he said little more than, "Follow me," as if he knew he was dealing with a person who yearned for order and authority in his personal life and in society. To Nathaniel he simply gave that intriguing observation: "I saw you when you were under the fig tree; I saw you when you revealed some of the deep desires of your heart; I witnessed your compassion; I want you with me!"

How remarkable was Jesus' ability to recognize people in trouble and to know what to say and do to help them! How keen he was to understand the frustrations of the little wealthy man who peered out at him from the branches of a sycamore tree! How quickly he realized the misery and inner spiritual thirst of the woman who had come to the village well in the mid-day sun so that she would not have to see or talk to anyone! How psychologically astute he is to first ask a man who was paralyzed thirty-eight years if he really wants to get well and give up his life of dependency for one of insecurity and responsibility!

Jesus took time really to see and listen and get to know people. Then he was able to introduce the Gospel to them at their place of need or at their point of power. Maybe he believed then what someone else said a long time ago: "We cannot teach another religious truth; we can only point out to him a way whereby he may find it for himself."

Jesus knew how to apply the Gospel effectively to every person he encountered, if they wanted it. He respected individuality and knew that ideas about God can be quite useless com-

pared with an experience of God. And, it may be that our ideas about God, our catechisms, our confessions, our theological systems and pronouncements are at great odds with him. And possibly our arrogant position on the issues of our day regarding all kinds of things are issues that cause offense just because we have taken a side and failed to follow the One who frequently exposed the truth "in the other point of view."

Somehow, it should be very difficult and uncomfortable to be a dogmatist of any kind and stand before Jesus. Who can ever forget the opinionated priests and elders who stood before him in the temple and the shock they received when he told them: "The tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the Kingdom of God ahead of you!"

### *Christian Friendship*

Jesus seems to bid us to do the harder job of being spiritually alert to what God is doing and desires to do through individual lives or groups. He related to people with intense sensitivity and compassion. He knew what it was to enter into whole-hearted friendships.

The Apostle Paul realized this and made this characteristic of Jesus the main theme of his second letter to the struggling young Christians in Corinth. In the classic translations of this letter, the word used to convey this theme is "reconciliation." But, in our translation, the word used to express all of this and more is the simple yet profound idea of "friendship."

Paul experienced the friendship of God through Christ on the road to Damascus and it revolutionized his life. He saw in the disintegrating fellowship at Corinth an absence of the

divine friendship. He saw their young faith eroding under the influence of Greek and even old Hebrew concepts of God, making God remote, indifferent, inaccessible to ordinary people. He saw morality and family life deteriorate because there was no dynamic relationship to Jesus Christ. The people in their estrangement and loneliness broke up into personality cliques surrounding Paul or Apollos or Peter. That fractured community was not unlike the hostile factions which permeate some of our religious groups or our nation and world today. Paul had something vital to help them then and what he said can save us. "Our message is that God was making friends of all men through Christ."

The Bible tells us that God has wanted to be the friend of people for a long time but only a few people take him up on it. Enoch must have been one of his earliest friends. One only takes "walks" with a friend. Abraham had such a relationship with God that his descendants called him "a friend of God." Jacob must have been a friend because who wrestles "all night" unless you enjoy it. Part of every friendship or marriage takes the form of combat at some point. Recently I came across an old book, *Some Cross-Bearers of the Finger Lakes*, which is a history of the development of the Catholic Church in this region going back to Indian times. The most illustrious pastor to come out of this district was Father Hendrick who led the mission in Aurora in the 1870's. This is what is said: "Father Hendrick and Rev. William H. Casey, pastor of the Episcopal churches in Union Springs, Aurora, and Cayuga, were very close friends. The two men often spent hours together, not always however visiting.

They both loved to box, and this particular sport was one of their favorite pastimes. Casey, shortly before his death in 1917, told the author that he and Father Hendrick once made a pact to this effect: Whichever died first was to be remembered in the prayers of the other as long as he lived. Bishop Hendrick was the first to be called to his reward. His dear old friend of many years, with tears falling on his pallid cheeks, assured the author that his part of the pact was kept most sacredly." Friends of God and therefore friends of each other!

God had other friends beside Enoch, Abraham, and Jacob. He had weak friends and strong friends like Jonah and Elijah. He had part-time and full-time friends like Samson and David, Amos and Hosea, Ruth and Naomi. "Where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. . . ." This is the language of friendship.

Jesus had a relationship of intimacy and participation with God that was beyond human comprehension. Any attempt to define the essence of that relationship, like people are trying to do all the time, will inevitably lead to a paradoxical creed and gross distortions of the One who was described in Scripture as being, "as we are, yet without sinning."

It was this very intimacy and friendship with God that brought down the wrath of the religious upon the head of Jesus. He spoke and acted with too much authority; there was a strange power in his intimacy which threatened their own power.

### *Transforming Friendship*

Jesus' friendship saw him address



God by saying "Abba"—the Aramaic form of the word "father" used by children and the affectionate. He was transformed by the friendship of God, too. He came to the point in his relationship with his disciples when he finally said: "I do not call you servants any longer. . . . Instead, I call you friends."

It is this transforming friendship through Christ which we need today. In our churches, in our towns and cities, within nations and amongst nations, there is despair over even the possibility of friendship between peoples. Jesus carried God's love to everyone he met and saw the world ripe and ready to receive it.

Once he looked out at a great crowd and felt deep compassion for them because "they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." There was a crisis in quality of life and leadership then like we have now. This caused him to turn to his disciples and say: "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

I think he means by this, that some will come into the Kingdom with the challenge to be born again; some will come to find meaning for their lives and have an adventure with God; some will come to find order and peace; some will come to find self-respect and decency; but, many, many will come for the Friendship.

Whatever good fruit I have seen in my ministry with prisoners has come as a result of introducing or encouraging them into a friendship with God through Christ. One young man with a serious criminal history began to flourish when he realized friendship with God was possible for him. Recently he tried to put his new feelings

into a poem which he entitled, "What Can I Give You, Lord?" It ends with these lines:

"But I think I've found something  
you can use,

Not the sky, not the grass, not a tree,  
It's something that's humble, imperfect,

The small gift to you, Lord, is Me."

In an age when the Christian faith appears to be in retreat, and articles appear in our national journals predicting the demise of various church denominations by the year A.D. 2000, it is time for us to discover again the basic dynamics of the church. Those dynamics must involve what Leslie Weatherhead described as the essence of our religion: "The matter might be simply stated by saying that Christianity is the acceptance of the gift of the friendship of Jesus."

The present loss of our vitality reminds me of the period in the life of the poet W. B. Yeats when he became ill and was no longer able to write. He was taken into the comfortable home of his patroness, Lady Gregory. When his strength began to return, he told her to push him back to work. "I asked her," he said, "to send me to my work every day by 11 a.m., and at some other hour to my letters, to berate me for idleness, if need be, and I doubt if I should have done much with my life but for her firmness and her care."

That was transforming friendship in action; and God's friendship in Christ and from other people comes to us in our sickness and sin, as individuals, as churches, as participants in a rather sick and divided society. That Friendship is there to heal us; and with its firmness and care, we are enabled to do something worthwhile with our lives and enter the Kingdom of God.

# The Preacher Game

by NEIL R. PAYLOR

THE congregation was honoring its pastor with a church dinner before he left to move to another parish. The association between them had been pleasant for both minister and people over ten years, growing in strength and affection each year. One officer got up to pay tribute to the man and, in doing so, said this: "During the years you've been here I've heard most of your sermons and I honestly must say that I can't remember any of them. What I do remember though is the man who preached them and what the sermons told me about him and how much that has meant to me and my family." The people who were gathered applauded enthusiastically at the trustee's words. The minister reacted with a smile of curiosity. Part of him wished that more people remembered what he had said. He was certainly glad that people knew him as a person, but just what *had* he told them through his sermons about himself? He wondered.

What do people find in the person of the preacher that is so helpful to them? A place to begin an answer to that question is with the preacher game that some children play. The teacher game and the doctor game are more often played by children and their meaning has been given attention.<sup>1</sup>

*A native of Fort Worth, Texas, the Rev. Neil R. Paylor is an alumnus of Hanover College, Princeton Theological Seminary and Harvard University. Currently associate professor of pastoral care at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Dr. Paylor has been Director of the Center for Pastoral Studies, a senior consultant to Family Communications, Inc., as well as supervising a counselling practice for clergy.*

Nothing has been written about the preacher game. It is an activity in which children play with the character of the preacher in ways that express the realities of their inner world. They fill in the figure of the preacher with themselves. Their play serves to bring to our attention some dimensions of the personal significance which the preacher has. The significance of the preacher for adults does not need to be confined to the play of children, but it will likely be enhanced by an understanding of how they use the preacher and what they use the preacher for in expressing themselves.

"Child's play" is really not so trifling an undertaking as the adult world has sometimes called it. It is the means which children use to master situations that have made a painful or a pleasant impression on them.<sup>2</sup> The play of children may be understood not only as a means of internal integration of their experiences with the external world, but as a bridge which leads back from the child's internal organization to objective reality.<sup>3</sup> Play facilitates the mas-

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288-297. Ernst Simmel, "The Doctor Game, Illness and the Profession of Medicine." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1926, 7:470-483.

<sup>2</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. London: Hogarth Press, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1950 and "Iden-

<sup>1</sup> Helen Ross, "The Teacher Game." *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1965, 20:

tery of both the world within and the external world of the child. The organizing activity it provides is more than a taking in of impressions of the outside world. It also includes the development of more intentional behavior for the shaping of that world.

Children use games as an organizing activity for their emotional life. When children play with the identity of the preacher they are both shaping that identity to express their inner world and they are, in turn, using that identity to modify their inner world. It is a reciprocal process.

No doubt the church officer was using the preacher in a similar fashion. The preacher enabled him to organize more clearly his sense of himself. In order to do that the officer had to invest the preacher with some of the aspects of his own emotional life. His comment at the church dinner was a word of appreciation that the preacher was a man who had helped him to express, to comprehend, and perhaps to change somewhat his emotional development. The preacher was someone he had been able to use for his personal growth.

What exactly was he getting at and how does it happen? What is it in the preacher with which people identify and which they use to gain a clearer understanding and some modification of themselves? The preacher game which children play affords us some insight into these questions. Some children appear to find in their experiences of a preacher dimensions of their development which they are endeavoring to master for the purposes of growth. There is something within the preacher

tity and the Life Cycle," *Psychological Issues*, 1959, 1:1.

which speaks to the inner world of the child. Understanding what that is may advance an awareness of what parishioners hear from the person of the preacher on a Sunday morning.

The *dramatis personae* of the preacher game usually include a preacher and a handful of hearers. The preacher is most often a boy though sometimes the part is played by a girl or given to a girl by a boy. The congregation may be a real or imagined group of other children who both listen and participate in the service through such activities as the singing of hymns and the collecting of the offering.

When the game is played by nursery school age children, the central event is the preaching. Props may include a pulpit constructed of blocks or an orange crate turned on end, a Bible which may be represented by a children's book, a container for the offering, papers describing the order of service, and seats for the congregants. The preacher may begin the service with a few declarations, but very soon the sermon starts. It continues for the duration of the game interrupted from time to time by prayers, an offering, announcements, hymns, and intermissions for a drink. The sermon rises and falls in emotional intensity relying on parts of phrases which the child has heard in a church service and usually delivered with vigorous language and bodily movement. A child may literally be jumping up and down or running as he preaches. The tone of what is said will frequently have a "hell-fire" harshness to it as the child-preacher warns and scolds. Part of the game is in the preacher's attempts to hold the listeners' attention and engage them as participants in the service before they

lose interest and move away or take over from the preacher. It is a big job.

There are numerous variations of the game.<sup>4</sup> The mock funeral of a playmate or the baptism of a pet may supply the organizing theme and activity replacing the sermon or diminishing its centrality. Innovations like these are more often introduced when the game is played by older children.

What does the game mean?<sup>5</sup> There are several answers to that question because there are a variety of uses which children make of it depending upon where they are in their development. A presentation of some of these uses here is intended to reflect this variety of ways children employ the character of the preacher for their personal growth. The variety is itself instructive as well as intriguing.

### (i)

Perhaps it is best to begin this consideration by saying that children who play the preacher game are not necessarily expressing a vocational preference for later life any more than children who play teacher or doctor or fireman. Children take many parts in the process of growing up which are useful to them at the time, serve their purpose, and then are replaced by others. When children engage in the preacher game it is because that professional identity is sufficiently available, familiar, and useful to them in representing their inner worlds. When the identity is unfamiliar, unavailable, or does not seem useful, a child will find other ways of working on these experiences of growth. It is a mistaken

notion to allow the game to be overly determinative either for the child who plays it or the one who chooses other means of play.

Many children who play with the identity of the preacher are three to four years of age, a time in their development when the drive to become autonomous from their parents is a central experience.<sup>6</sup> The need to push away from parents while at the same time retaining a sense that they are constantly available within the child to be used at the child's discretion when his own resources become depleted is a very important step in the process of growth. The preacher game helps with this. The game draws upon the power of the preacher. A 42-month-old boy announced this power with the declaration, "I'm preaching the Bible to you. Now look at it!"<sup>7</sup> The compliance of his playmates confirmed the authority which this power conferred upon him. This same child asserted his license to preach with the announcement, "My daddy don't preach no more so I preach."<sup>8</sup> His identification with his father together with his use of religious symbols provided him with a very strong thrust in his drive for autonomy. The child-preacher's omnipotence is drawn from the Bible, religious rituals, and borrowed from such people as teachers, parents, and adult preachers. The power of the preacher is enhanced by the intensive physical movements of the game. They express and channel a forceful amount of aggression which a child must organize in order to become more independent.

<sup>5</sup> Erik Erikson, 1950. *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Deborah Vial, *Observations from the Playroom*, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1977.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> William P. Barker, *Notes From Ballindor*. Boston: Cape Cod Press, 1977.



The preacher combines the child's wishes for autonomy with the figure of a person who lives in reference to and under the direction of a higher authority. The power of the preacher is bounded by the power of God. The character of the preacher enables children who play with it to modulate their instincts for power. That identity keeps intact for the child a sense of expanding autonomy and sustained contact with parental care.

The growth of a child requires a series of separations from primary attachments. These separations do not occur without a sense of loss and they give rise to vigorous attempts to recover the attachments. A child will utilize an ideal to help with these losses and restitutions.<sup>8</sup> It provides an organization which reflects the desirable qualities of the parents and which prompts the child to behavior which will gain him a feeling of being continuously loved undiminished by the separations.<sup>9</sup> The character of the preacher is just such an ideal for the young child. Identifying with this ideal by means of the game restores the child's sense of closeness and happiness which was experienced during the earlier days of their lives.

The child-preacher announced to his "congregation" that the hymn for the morning would be the first verse of "London Bridge is Falling Down."<sup>10</sup> The children stood and sang with feel-

ing and attention as if the hymn held some personal concern for them which, in fact, it did. It is a capturing song, if you remember. Tension builds in it until the end when it is relieved by the capture of "my fair lady." It is as if the bridge between the child and the parents is indeed falling down or, at least, becoming unsteady. Only by holding on to someone like a "my fair lady" does the child feel that she or he can advance in growth without becoming disconnected from the past and consequently lost. Playing with the ideal of the preacher affords the participants the opportunity for an increased sense of mastery of their dependency and their expanding autonomy by providing them with a temporary bond of affiliation with those who care for them.

(ii)

What happens when a child is not able to satisfy the ideal? This question is posed by the observation of a boy who was having difficulty recruiting other children to play the preacher game with him.<sup>11</sup> His appearance became woebegone. "Church is over," he said in a half-voice, dejected in tone. One child tried to help him by passing the offering hat to others who were playing nearby. They brushed aside the invitation. The preacher became more desperate and in an attempt to gain a hearing he announced that this was his microphone as he held up a wood block. He tried some "electronic preaching," but he was generally ignored by his peers. When this effort failed, he went to another boy who had often played preacher with him and asked pleadingly, "Will you sit by me?" The friend did not answer, but

<sup>8</sup> Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction." *Standard Edition*, 14:67-73. London: Hogarth Press, 1957.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Sandler, "On the Concept of the Superego." *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1960, 15:128-162. Roy Schafer, "The Loving and Beloved Superego in Freud's Structural Theory" (1960). *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1960, 15:163-190.

<sup>10</sup> Deborah Vial, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

wandered on into a playhouse. The preacher looked lost, very lonely, and for the moment unable to move himself in any direction.

An unfulfilled ego ideal results in a sense of inner impoverishment.<sup>12</sup> The child then looks longingly outside himself for an ideal to love, one which possesses the excellence he may have had in the past, but feels he can no longer attain. The preacher game may not always serve to enhance the self-esteem of those who play it. Quite the opposite, in fact. The activity may, on occasion, evoke within the child an almost overwhelming sense of depletion. An ideal can fail for children as well as adults when it does not provide love, but an unattainable goal. The preacher may be an ideal which is at risk for this kind of failure when it is experienced as an ideal which cannot be drawn on and shared in by the child. The participation and support of other children may then become a kind of substitute for the unfulfilled ideal which will, at times, leave the child-preacher feeling empty.

Another central characteristic of the game has to do with standing in front of others in order to be seen by them. Being seen by others is a variation on the impulse to look. Children derive exhibitionistic pleasure from being looked upon by others.<sup>13</sup> One young boy managed to gain this enjoyment without the benefit of playmates by means of the use of a mirror so that he could look upon himself.<sup>14</sup>

### (iii)

A third meaning of the game has to do with the developing sense of distinction children at this age are beginning to make between the sexes. In one episode of the game, the 42-month-old boy was instructing a male friend in the art of preaching. The playmate wanted to sit down and he was admonished. "No, you *stand up* to preach," as if the erect posture in some way helped to constitute the person doing the preaching. Two months later in a subsequent "church service" the playmate had graduated and become a preacher himself. He declared to a girl in the "congregation" who wanted to preach, "Girls don't preach, men preach." Being a preacher had to do with being a man for these boys and they were using the game to develop their growing sense of manhood.

Power within bounds, exhibitionistic pleasure, and sexual identification are three uses which children three to four years of age make of the preacher game. The game helps them develop a better understanding and organization of the world within and around them. This description by no means exhausts the uses which children make of the game. It is presented with the idea of introducing a dimension of preaching to which the church officer was calling attention; namely, the person within the preacher. The children's game helps us to see more clearly certain aspects of that person because there does not exist in the game the rather heavy overlay of ideational and rational content which is present in the adult activity.

The assumption of this article is that the very same process, however, goes on with adults as with children. The

<sup>12</sup> Sigmund Freud, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Sigmund Freud (1905), "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality," *Standard Edition*, 7:125-245. London: Hogarth Press, 1953.

<sup>14</sup> William P. Barker, *op. cit.*

developmental experiences on which adults are working may be different or they may be similar to those of children. In either case, the preacher functions to express, to contain, and to modify the emotional life of the person who makes use of that character. Many adults find within the preacher traits with which they can identify. They perceive in that figure certain characteristics which they find useful in the continuing organization of their emotional life.<sup>15</sup> The extent to which this happens probably depends on the person of the preacher. That is the reciprocal process described earlier. The person of the preacher must somehow convey to those in the congregation that there are important and relevant dimensions of human experience within this professional identity; that there is, indeed, a person within the preacher available and worthwhile for their use. A discussion of how this happens and the significance it has for the adult preacher constitutes the remainder of this article.

An assumption has been introduced that adults use the preacher in a fashion similar to children who play the preacher game even when the adults are working on quite different developmental experiences and that this use is somehow contingent upon the person of the preacher. This premise needs to be elaborated. It rests on three presuppositions.

(a)

First, the adult who hears the preacher must have within him or her a set of emotional needs to which the

preacher is relevant and a proclivity to identify with that character. Not all persons are able to find in the preacher dimensions of their emotional life on which they want to work, just as not all children are able to play the preacher game.

(b)

Second, the person of the preacher must somehow invite that identification when the hearer *is* available. This is the reciprocity. The readiness of an adult person in the congregation to identify with certain characteristics of the preacher will be significantly interfered with if the person of the preacher does not make those dimensions of experience available or makes them available in such distorted ways that their usefulness is seriously curtailed. It was the person of the preacher whom the church officer found to be so helpful and memorable.

(c)

A third supposition has to do with the person of the preacher. The individual who is doing the preaching is also using the identity of the preacher to work on his or her own growth. Persons choose to be preachers because that character provides them with a vehicle into life experiences on which they want to continue working for the better organization and understanding of their emotional lives. The way in which they do this work, in turn, has a profound bearing upon the kind of invitation which they extend to those in their hearing to make use of the preacher in their growth. It is this third assertion which I want to bracket for your consideration. It introduces such inquiries as how ministers use the

<sup>15</sup> Brooks E. Holifield, "The Hero and the Minister in American Culture." *Theology Today*, 1977, 33:370-379.

identity of the preacher to work on their growth, what sorts of life experiences do they work on by means of the preacher, and what can be said about the way in which they do this work in terms of its usefulness to others.

Where does one look for answers to questions like these? They cannot be found solely in the content of the sermon. The way in which a minister uses the preacher for personal growth cannot be adequately assessed, for example, by means of the amount and quality of personal references which are included in a sermon. Pastors use the preacher for personal development without ever introducing themselves explicitly into a sermon. The use which clergy make of the preacher is more fully understood by thinking about the variety of meanings the preaching event has for the person of the preacher. These meanings include the way the biblical material is treated, but they also range beyond the contents of the sermon.

The weekly event of preaching has enormous significance for most parish pastors. Listening to them talk about themselves as preachers one hears the considerable investment which they make each week in the preparation and delivery of a Sunday morning sermon. They often describe their work in terms of the rhythm of days building in intensity to a climax at the eleven o'clock hour only to begin anew on Monday. The sermon influences family life, the temperament of the pastor, and the way in which other work gets done. Its impact produces summer conferences and winter seminars where pastors with whirring tape recorders search for new sermon ideas and novel ways of presenting old ones. Prepara-

tion and delivery of the Sunday morning sermon are major organizing activities in the weekly lives of many pastors and their families. Within these activities, one can identify developmental experiences on which pastors are working.

A forty-six-year-old preacher described his weekly ordeal to get started and then to complete his sermon in terms of the inevitable last minute preparation late Saturday and early Sunday morning and the accompanying discouragement and anger which it generated within him and his wife. He described his work as "enjoying the trip, but never arriving at my destination." He was referring to the pleasure which came from the preparation he made for a sermon but the difficulty he experienced in getting it organized and bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion. "I'm always leading up to something with my congregation," he said, "and while that gives a certain air of excitement to my preaching after awhile I start to wonder if people don't get bored with that."

The problem seemed to lie, as he talked about it, in his identification with his listeners. He knew they had questions and doubts and he wanted his sermons to reflect their uncertainties. His efforts to include his congregation in his sermon made it difficult for him to say anything very clearly, directly, or conclusively. He continually wondered what this person in the church would think or feel or say if he said that or that person if he said this. He often wished that he could give his preaching as well as his leadership a clearer definition, but he did not want to be insensitive to anyone. Consequently, his weekly sermon preparation



was an agonizing time in which he tried to show a concern for his parishioners by describing his own spiritual pilgrimage, some of his inward reservations regarding religious beliefs, and by resisting a resolution in favor of continuing the quest together with the members.

The preacher represented for this man both a need for and a fear of intimacy. The sermon was an avenue for displaying his own religious questions in the hope that there would be some among his hearers who would respond in kind. This reaching out was distorted, however, by the unfinished quality of it. It must have been difficult for the people in that congregation to get a clear sense of who or where the preacher was in order that they could get close to him. His sermons, in fact, had the effect of keeping people at a distance. They exhibited his need for closeness, but in a way that cut short any satisfaction of it.

A thirty-year-old minister confided to his former seminary professor that his preaching was little more than the thinly disguised use of other famous people's sermons. He felt very guilty about this. The only reason he could give for doing it was that he thought his own ideas and beliefs would be unacceptable to the congregation who listened to him in his small rural parish. Commonly acknowledged tenets of biblical criticism which he had studied he feared would jeopardize the faith of the members and his leadership. "If I told those people what I know about the two stories of creation in Genesis, their faith would be shaken and they would be very angry with me." That was his estimation of the danger to himself and others which his

ideas posed. He also tended to see himself as lacking the spiritual conviction required of someone in his position. He was frightened that people would find out about his inner thoughts and consider him a hypocrite. Using the sermons of others gave him some protection from that fear even though it was purchased at a very high price.

A parishioner would occasionally call him "preacher" when greeting him at church or in the community. He disliked the name intensely. He preferred to think of himself as merely an agent of God's word having no particular claim to any power or authority which would set him apart from other members of the congregation. He dressed like them during the week and on Sunday mornings, foregoing any liturgical apparel in order to express this conviction.

The preacher represented for this young man a search, almost a longing for powerful authorities outside himself who would help him contain the fear of his own leadership. "I never want to become a wheeler-dealer like my parents," he said reflecting on his anxieties. Preaching had become for him a means of restoring the leadership to other men whom he considered to be more deserving of the position. On the one hand, the preacher was a denial of his own authority, power, and capability.

On the other hand, this minister began to discover that his approach to preaching enabled him to identify with the prominent preachers he imitated. The identification was reinforced by the praise he received from his hearers, most of which he promptly ascribed to the Lord, but a small amount of which he kept privately for himself. He came

to the point of being able to acknowledge his own wishes for power and authority and to deal directly with their significance for him and his ministry.

These two men expressed through their use of the preacher the developmental conflicts they were having with intimacy and authority. Their sermons were distorted attempts to reach out and to hide behind. Their preaching also represented their efforts to understand and modify their conflicts. Their preaching had helped them to recognize themselves and to seek help with their growth. It became an occasion for them to engage themselves in a process of discovery and change.

The preacher can express not only developmental conflicts, but developmental resolutions as well. These resolutions convey to the congregation the moral, protective, and comforting know-how which is within the person of the preacher. This know-how is part of being an effective religious leader and it comes from the relationships which the person of the preacher has had with the authorities who have comforted him or her. When the minister can find in these internalized relationships experiences of giving and receiving love, then the character of the preacher may be used to generate and to express a sense of sustained contact with people, the pleasure derived from morality, relief from the inevitable sense of guilt, and the substitution of activity for passivity.<sup>16</sup>

The resolutions which persons have achieved with their aggression is closely connected to how they use the preacher. If ministers have had the opportunity in their development to experience the

limits of their aggression in ways that enable them to move through it and beyond it, its destructive characteristics are at a greater distance and exist in forms that they can use in caring for people. Preaching is filled with conflict when the man or woman doing it is aware of destructive impulses within themselves. Intimacy and authority arouse intense anxieties for preachers when they cannot trust their own aggression. When they have accomplished this, they can be relatively unambivalent in exercising the leadership of their congregations through their preaching. A variation of this is observed in some persons who license their destructive aggression through preaching. It is as if the preacher fears being loving and loved. Hostile aggression is used to conceal the tender and caring aspects which exist within the person of the preacher in order to avoid the conflicts which they evoke. The integration of loving and loved leadership with aggression within the preacher involves an important developmental mastery.

Graduating theological students and many ministers are uncomfortable with the notion that the position of the minister requires considerable aggression. The denial or dampening of that dimension of emotional life is expressed through a view of the church which emphasizes the equality of all members or, at most, distinctions in the church based solely on function. In these models, the aggression of the minister is held in check. The instinct for autonomy and the power necessary to achieve it which was observed in the preacher game of children may be aroused in adults when they assume the vocational identity of the preacher. Such an impulse may be quite frighten-

<sup>16</sup> Roy Schafer, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

ing and generate a resistance to being or having an authoritative leader. It is when pastors are able to discover within themselves loving and loved relationships with the people who have been authorities for them that they can use the power of the preacher without having to place immobilizing bounds on it.

It seems worthwhile considering whether the presently crowded curriculum of a theological seminary might not help in some way with this discovery through its educational process. Perhaps it might be worked on just at the point where preaching is taught. How it might be done is an exciting question. In addition to preparing the sermon, students might be asked to write down what the sermon means to them by addressing such questions as where the idea for it came from, why they decided to use it, and what does it have to do with them as persons. Each part of the sermon might be thought about in terms of the significant relationships and experiences in the lives of students from which it comes. Most sermon ideas even when they sound abstract and rhetorical have some personal or interpersonal reference associated with them of which the preacher may be more or less aware. Undoubtedly, there are countless ways of approaching the task. The purpose of all of them would, however, be the same: an exegesis of the sermon to discover the person of the preacher. The intention would be similar to what had been done with the biblical text to uncover the person of its writer in order that what was written could be better understood. And that is the point. Ministers use the preacher to see themselves more clearly and the relationships and experiences they are trying to sort out

through this activity. That reflection enriches both the preacher and the person doing it. How much of this could be productively done by the student alone and how much would need the guidance of a professor or consultant would require further refinement.

But we are not finished with the comment of the church officer. He said he remembered the person of the preacher more than his sermons. His remark does not depreciate what was said in those sermons so much as underline the importance of the person who was delivering them. It is a reality which children have known and made use of for some time. It is the person of the preacher who enlivens the sermon and the sermon which enables the person of the minister to organize and modify his or her needs so that the preacher, in turn, enlivens the person of the minister with the Word of God. When ministers attempt to hide their identities behind the sermon, they are bound to convey to their hearers that it is the sermon apart from the person which is important and, of course, it isn't. When ministers attempt to fulfill themselves through the preacher as if their own development had failed them, leaving them impoverished and empty, then they are bound to communicate to the congregation that its importance far exceeds any message of the gospel which the preacher has to bring and, of course, it doesn't. It is as ministers make themselves available as persons through their preaching that human experience takes on the language of faith. This process is useful, even memorable, to those who listen and are able to identify with the person of the preacher. This is one way pastor and people continue growing up together as children of God.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Called to Freedom*, by Daniel L. Migliore. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1980. Pp. 130. \$5.95 (paper).

This slight volume belies its scope and content. The sweep and substance of its argument are neither casual nor contrived. The argument is popular without being trivial and is designed to instruct the informed and uninformed alike, who are seriously curious about Christian theology. Its Calvinistic tonalities are unmistakable yet winsomely tympanic. Here is a point of entry into the mystery and profundity of Christian insight, faith and understanding at which the beginner in theological studies—whether in a parish, a theological Seminary, a college or university; on a farm or in an office—can set out upon “an invitation to pilgrimage.” In a time of mounting publishing costs, of mergers and failures and frights among publishing houses, Professor Migliore has fulfilled what must surely be a publisher’s dream: a book on Christian Theology that is thoughtful and informative, contemporary and readable, *and* affordable. Let The Westminster Press be accorded the honorable mention which is its due.

Readers of *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* will know that Daniel Migliore is a professor of theology in the Seminary. Not a few recent graduates may well have shared in the development of the argument of these pages in course. On a lonely parish frontier, or amidst the hectic pace of ministry in city or suburbia, they will welcome this fruition of what may have begun with them. Here is a laudable resource for the nurture of their ongoing commitment to what they are doing. When one thinks of the capitulation to the quantitative and pragmatic *Zeitgeist* exemplified by a recent espousal of the case-method in theological study—under the aegis, no less, of the American Theological Society—tutored and untutored, believing and unbelieving readers alike can be at once grateful and encouraged by the approach, content, and level of this volume. Theology worthy of the name is still being done in Princeton Seminary, whatever the state of piety and of

the concern for justice there may be. This little book is a sign that serious theological curiosity and reflection is not being short-changed, “always, everywhere, and by all.”

Certain lapses of statement and style may be attended to before proceeding to the context in which they occur. The contrast between “the production of academic theological treatises about freedom” and “increased participation of Christian pastors and lay people in the process . . . of freedom” (p. 17), is surely a half-truth which unwittingly reinforces a pejorative stereotype of theology still widely current. The complaint against Karl Barth’s one-sided Christocentrism (p. 37) echoes a familiar stricture, supported less by a careful consideration of Barth’s unfolding argument, especially in KD IV/2 and 3, than by the circumstance that readers of the KD seldom get beyond Volume II, or, at best, IV/1. As regards style, it must be acknowledged that the *Introduction* does not immediately alert a prospective reader’s attention, owing to an over-pedagogical preoccupation with the aim and method of the book. Similarly, the *Conclusion* is not really a conclusion. It is rather a summary of what has been previously presented, a tendency by which the reader has already been somewhat disenchanted at the end of Chapter One, at the beginning of Chapter Two, and perhaps especially, as chapter Four gets under way.

Nevertheless, the substance and the merit of Professor Migliore’s book notably overtake the lapses. The thesis is that “the Christian gospel is a message of freedom: the astonishing freedom of God for us, the gift of freedom that is ours in faith, and the responsible exercise of this new freedom” (p. 13). A corollary thesis is that “the message of God’s gift and call to freedom is of the greatest importance to the struggle for liberation from all forms of bondage so characteristic of our time” (p. 13). Aware that the intimate connection between the Christian gospel and human freedom is not a discovery of recent theology, the unfolding discussion seeks to show that “at critical points in its history, the church has become more fully aware of the integral relationship between the redemptive activity of God and the rise of a new human freedom,” *and* that the contemporary



church is called to freedom in these days by "the challenge to extend still further its understanding of the bond between the gospel and the liberation of the oppressed" (p. 14). The bearer of this challenge is "the theology of liberation," as it is being expressed by "Christians in the third world, black Christians, and Christian women" (p. 14).

As elaborated and sustained, this thesis converts these pages from a tract into a treatise. Amidst the tedious spate of responses to "the theology of liberation," with their dubious instinct for timeliness, that dot the theological landscape, these pages are notable for their resistance to the temptation to surrender tradition to timeliness. Instead, they exhibit a heartening and perceptive grasp of the depth, clarity, and vitality of the theological tradition in candid, creative, and critical conversation with the timely concerns at the heart of liberation theology. The result is a primer for a Christian theology of freedom under a double liberation. On the one hand, there is the liberation of the theological tradition from the literalism, obscurantism, and indifference to the human struggle for justice that tenaciously tempt and afflict it. On the other hand, there is the liberation of "liberation theology" from the stultifying temptation to ideology which narrows the depth and range of freedom as *human* freedom and politicizes the struggle for *human* justice as a transfiguring political struggle. Thus, a *dialectical dialogue* is opened up between a theology of freedom and a theology of liberation. Such a dialogue spares the reader an invitation to consider a variety of responses to the theme of liberation as articulated by liberation theologians. The reader is invited instead to "read, mark, and inwardly digest" an introductory statement of Christian theology designed to retell the Christian story "in terms that are understandable to people here and now" (p. 13). Requisite to the retelling is not a "a theology in a new key"; or a displacement of *neo-orthodoxy* by *paleo-orthodoxy*; or even philosophical essays in response to liberation theology. The retelling of the story requires a faithful and perceptive listening to and reflection upon *the story* in the context of the liberating struggle for the freedom to be human, wherever and whenever that struggle has reached its moment of truth and point of no return.

In retelling the story, Migliore singles out

five doctrines basic to Christian theology in its formation and coherence. The purpose is "to affirm both the importance and the limits of interpreting the gospel today as God's liberating activity in which we are called to take part" (p. 14). These doctrines focus upon the interpretation and understanding of Scripture, of Jesus Christ, of the Trinity, of Spirituality, and of the Christian hope. One can only hint, in this review, at the theological adventure proposed by Migliore, as he pursues the dialectical dialogue between the Christian tradition and the central concerns of liberation theology.

There is, to begin with, a revised interpretation of the authority of Scripture. When the Bible is read *historically*, *theocentrically*, and *contextually*, the central theme of Scripture "as the story of God's liberating activity, which has its focus in Jesus of Nazareth" (p. 33) and "the authority of Scripture (as) the liberating power of its message" are experienced and exposed. When the Scriptures are centered upon Jesus of Nazareth in *this* sense, a significant move is on beyond the traditional differentiation between his life and his work, and between the poles of incarnation and satisfaction, between which the "who-ness" and the "what-ness" of Jesus has tended in the tradition to fluctuate. When Jesus is understood as the liberator, as the bearer of God's freedom for humankind and of human freedom in and for him, "God's new world has established a beach-head in the world" (p. 59). The concrete evidence of this beach-head is a community of Spirit which is inclusive, nourished by the relation between suffering and liberation, and "which celebrates the grace of God here and now" (p. 59).

It follows from this view of the authority of Scripture and of "who Jesus Christ is for us today?" (Bonhoeffer's question is properly appropriated but unacknowledged), that the doctrine of the Trinity comes into its own once again. The Trinity is to be understood "not speculatively but evangelically" (p. 75). So understood it expresses a radical revolution in our understanding of God (p. 68). A move is on beyond absolute power and absolute freedom, beyond fideism and atheism, in the understanding of God and of what God is up to. The direction is towards a genuinely personal and social experience and interpretation of the freedom in and

through which "the knowledge of God and of ourselves" (Calvin) is genuinely fulfilling. According to Migliore—and I think correctly—the doctrine of the Trinity is the fulcrum of a perspective and a dynamic in the experience and understanding of God which generates "continuous disturbing criticisms of our established notions of God and our established ways of life" (p. 78).

It may be noted—although Migliore does not make the connection in this way—that a defective trinitarianism has befallen the church and beset the church with the disastrous consequences of a faulty spirituality. "The trinitarian history of God empowers and guides the effort of the church to fashion a human society . . . in such a way that (like the divine society) the good of the one is the good of all . . ." (p. 75). The disregard of this history delivers the church over to a spirituality of privatism, emotionalism, asceticism and moralism. In these days, such a spirituality has gone political and erupted in the strident self-righteousness of "the moral majority." Thus, an unintended confirmation of Migliore's argument has plainly emerged. The link between spirituality and politics is proper enough if the church's trinitarianism is in order. When this is the case, its unfailing sign is the co-inherence of a spirituality of liberation and a solidarity with the poor (p. 96). The traditional conceptuality of spirituality—repentance, new birth, conversion, self-denial (*mortification* is Migliore's word), commitment—is thus enlarged in scope and deepened in meaning (p. 94). "The new spirituality of liberation is a political spirituality but it is not the tailoring of the Christian life to the measurements of particular political ideologies and programs" (p. 94). How difficult of practice this new spirituality is "for middle-class North American Christians" (p. 96), is eloquently and movingly described and analyzed by way of a passage from *Huckleberry Finn* (pp. 83-89). The passage is worth a daily reminder and perhaps the choicest segment of the book.

The book concludes on a similarly high note with a chapter which undertakes to show that the retelling of the Christian story deepens, enlarges, and alters the meaning of hope. Eschatology undergoes a notable revision the fulcrum of which is a radically changed view of death. A culture that

has largely ignored death, although permeated by it, can no longer hide behind certain subterfuges provided by problematical "mourners" and "mournings" (Mk. 5:40) like Elizabeth Kuebler-Ross' stages on death's way, Alan Harrington's medical engineering, and Raymond Moody's reports of life after life. The journey from death as natural, via death as manageable, to scarcely Wordsworthian "intimations of immortality" is a flagrant contradiction of Christian hope. Christian hope, on the contrary, differs from humanistic despair and confidence, cynicism and utopianism, owing to its anchorage in the conviction and trust that "our destiny as persons and the completion of God's purposes for the entire creation are indivisible" (pp. 119-20). "The quest for personal fulfillment and concern for the liberation of all creatures" (p. 120) are joined together in authentic Christian hope.

Migliore's discussion of Christian hope is illumined by hints, at once tantalizing and intriguing, that the age-old problem of theodicy, centered upon the justification of God's ways, has been displaced by the perennial human problem of suffering, centered upon and set free by the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the point of entry into the trinitarian mystery of God whose "history of self-expanding, community-forming love" (p. 119) ". . . accepts the risk of suffering in resistance to the powers of self-assertion, injustice and socially manufactured misery and death," and expresses "an altogether different freedom, a freedom for others that is stronger than death" (p. 120).

One can but hope that these hints about hope are a foretaste of a systematic theology in process of elaboration. Taken together with the chapter on the Trinity, and the one on Spirituality, Professor Migliore offers in these pages an informative and challenging indication that a healing conversation between the Christian tradition and an alienated culture such as our own is possible, credible, and persuasive. A long overdue *coincidentia oppositorum* is at hand which exposes the "failure of nerve" and the trivialization of Christian theology abroad in the land, frantically endeavoring to keep center stage in departments of theology and religious studies, and straining to train a ministry

in and for the church through a self-consciousness unable to distinguish stones from bread and scorpions from fish. Dr. Migliore wears his learning lightly; and he lets his unmistakable grasp of the substance and resources of theology shine through with the effectiveness of surprise, at points at once central and critical to the recovery of authentic Christian theology today.

PAUL LEHMANN

Union Theological Seminary  
New York, NY

*I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible, vol. 8), by P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. Doubleday & Co., Garden City, NY, 1980. Pp. xxi + 475. \$14.00.

McCarter's new commentary on I Samuel is one of the better commentaries in the Anchor Bible series and the best commentary currently available on I Samuel. It is one of the more difficult biblical books to treat in a commentary because of the variety of problems it presents to the commentator. There is the very serious text critical issue of establishing the text that one is to exegete. Then there is the problem of explaining the book's process of composition and deciding what exegetical significance to attach to each of the stages in this development. Finally, there is the not insignificant task of writing notes and comments which will be intelligible and interesting to the laypeople for whom the series is supposedly intended, while still satisfying the scholarly audience that does make heavy use of the series. McCarter's treatment of each of these assignments deserves an "A."

He gives a short but superb introduction to the texts and versions as a part of his general introduction, and he separates the textual notes from the exegetical notes in the body of his commentary. This enables McCarter to do justice to the text critical issues, without requiring the average reader to wade through an extensive technical discussion that would simply bore him. McCarter, of course, had access to the Samuel scrolls from Qumran, and he uses them, along with the ancient versions, to reconstruct a so-called eclectic text superior to any one of our

textual witnesses. His textual criticism is careful, reasoned, and, for the most part, convincing.

McCarter's treatment of the book's literary development is also exemplary. The final editing of the book is basically the work of the deuteronomistic editor (Dtr<sup>1</sup>) of the Josianic period. Only one verse (12:25) was contributed by the exilic writer (Dtr<sup>2</sup>). Dtr<sup>1</sup> had before him an earlier prophetic history, however. This history was northern, pre-deuteronomistic, and composed during or shortly after the collapse of the northern kingdom. The prophetic history had reworked three older sources or complex of sources: 1) the ark narrative, 2) a complex of stories about Saul, and 3) a history of David's rise to power. McCarter basically follows Miller and Roberts in his analysis and dating of the ark narrative to the pre-Davidic period, but he supplements and corrects their work by explaining how it was transformed to fit into its present context. The history of David's rise to power received little prophetic reworking, and McCarter regards it as a document from David's own time. The Saul material is more complex; early material reworked in a form similar to the Samson cycle toward the end of the ninth century has been further reworked by the author of the prophetic history.

It is difficult to do justice to McCarter's discussion in this brief compass, but his reconstruction of the literary history of the book is coherent, compatible with what we know of ancient Near Eastern literary genres, and, in general, convincing. There are points at which one may quibble, of course. McCarter does not make clear enough the content of the original oracle in 3:11-14, and this writer is not convinced that the judgment oracle in chapter 2 is totally Dtr<sup>1</sup>. The ancient story requires a judgment oracle of some sort, and McCarter's discussion does not satisfy that need. Such minor points of disagreement, however, do not affect his overall reconstruction, which I find convincing.

Having resolved, at least hypothetically, the literary history of the book, McCarter takes serious account of this in his comments, which he divides into more technical "notes" and more general "comment." In the judgment of this reviewer, he has succeeded in giving due weight to the earlier



shapes of the material without slighting the final form of the book. His exegetical comments are to the point, well written, and characterized by just the right touch of good humor to make them a genuine delight to read. I cannot recommend this book too highly.

J.J.M. ROBERTS

*The Prophets—Nevi'im: A New Translation of The Holy Scriptures According to The Masoretic Text* (second section). The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, PA, 1978. Pp. xviii + 898. \$9.00 (cloth); \$15.00 (leather).

The first volume of the Jewish Publication Society of America's new translation of the Hebrew Bible appeared in 1963. That volume, which contained the Torah, Genesis through Deuteronomy, was received with wide acclaim. This new volume, which contains the former and latter prophets, Joshua, Judges, I-II Samuel, I-II Kings, and Isaiah through Malachi, should prove equally popular. It is the product of a fifteen-year labor of a distinguished editorial committee headed by H. Louis Ginsberg. Other members of the committee were Harry Orlinsky, the late Max Arzt, Bernard J. Bamberger, Harry Freedman, and Solomon Grayzel.

Because of its stated purpose and its primary audience, the translation sticks very closely to the traditional Masoretic text. It does suggest alternate readings in the footnotes, however, and these alternate readings, particularly in the latter prophets, offer a gold mine of often brilliant emendations. Behind many of these readings one can detect the genius of Ginsberg, and, at least with regard to Isaiah, they partially compensate scholars for the loss they felt when Ginsberg withdrew from his commitment to do Isaiah in the Anchor Bible series.

It is difficult in short compass to characterize a translation without resorting to misleading generalities. Rather than doing that, this reviewer will risk being unrepresentative in another way by selecting one extended section of a single chapter as representative of the translation.

In Isaiah 1:1 the JPS renders *h'zôn* and

*h'zāh* as "prophecies" and "prophesied" rather than the traditional "vision" and "saw." This follows the Targum and, though debatable, represents an attempt to get at the meaning of the terms as used rather than being satisfied with a translation dictated merely by etymology.

The translation of 1:4c, "brood of evil-doers," is superior to RSV's "offspring of evildoers," because RSV seems more ambiguous as to who the evildoers are, Isaiah's audience or the parents of his audience. He is referring to his audience, of course, because the parent in the context is God himself (vs. 2). However, the JPS like the RSV fails to grasp the syntax of 1:4e-g, with its straightforward third person translation: "they have forsaken . . . spurned . . . turned their backs. . . ." These three clauses are unmarked relative clauses following the vocative address *hoy* (4:1a), which is resumed by the second person address in vs. 5. The Greek and Syriac translations apparently understood that and changed the verbs to second person to keep the sense. Among modern English translations the TIV and the NEB have seen this. NEB renders, "O sinful nation . . . who have deserted . . . spurned . . . and turned your backs. . . ." With this rendering there is no longer any reason for the open spacing between vv. 4 and 5.

JPS's translation of *bt sywn* in 1:8 as "Fair Zion" in place of the traditional "daughter of Zion" is an improvement, though the precise connotation of that idiom remains obscure. "Another Gomorrah!" as a translation of the last clause in vs. 9 is less happy because it does not reflect the balance in the Hebrew, where both it and the preceding parallel clause have verbs. On the other hand, the thought division and translation of vv. 12-13 is excellent, though this is one case where the committee actually incorporated emendations in the text:

That you come to appear before Me—  
Who asked that of you?  
Trample My courts

no more;  
Bringing oblations is futile,  
Incense is offensive to Me.

One should also note the interesting translation of vs. 27:



Zion shall be saved in the judgment;  
Her repentant ones, in the retribution.

—which is justified by a note referring the reader to 5:16 and 10:22. The correction of “they” to “you” in vs. 29 is also undoubtedly correct.

On the negative side, the rendering of 1:15, “Your hands are stained with crime—,” seems far less literary than the original, and the rendering of almost identical expressions in vv. 17 and 23, once as “Uphold the rights of the orphan” and the other time as “judge the case of the orphan,” seems rather unfortunate to this reviewer.

In short, this is a very fresh, readable, and often suggestive translation. Like all translations, however, it has its weaknesses, and in serious Bible study should be supplemented by reference to other translations. Nevertheless, in this reviewer’s own work in the latter prophets, he has found the new JPS translation to be one of the most useful and consistently suggestive among the contemporary English translations.

J.J.M. ROBERTS

*The Book of Jeremiah*, by J. A. Thompson (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1980. Pp. 819. \$22.50.

J. A. Thompson’s *The Book of Jeremiah* is the fourth volume to be published in Eerdmans’ NICOT series, and it may be the best of the lot. It is a very good commentary. The introduction of some 133 pages sets the tone for the whole volume. Thompson treats each of the major issues in the study of Jeremiah in a limited yet adequate scope. In the process the author reveals himself as thoroughly conversant with the secondary literature, balanced in his judgments, and irenic in tone. Moreover, he writes in a clear, readable English that is all too rare in this genre of literature.

In his discussion of the origin of the so-called C material, Thompson is influenced by the dynamic view of E. W. Nicholson that posits Deuteronomic preachers active among the exiles after 587 B.C. updating and reworking Jeremiah’s message. At the same

time, however, Thompson feels that Nicholson has overdone his argument. It is important to see the relevance of Jeremiah’s preaching to the post-587 era, but one must question how much alteration the later tradents had to make to Jeremiah’s message to achieve that relevance. In short, one can also use this material to help recover Jeremiah’s own message to the pre-587 situation as John Bright attempts to do.

This kind of balancing between alternative positions is characteristic of Thompson’s work. He gives a very balanced treatment of covenant, a cautious, but sound, treatment of the textual problems in the book, and he argues that the call of Jeremiah indicates that hope as well as judgment was a part of Jeremiah’s message from the beginning. He rejects the identification of the Scythians as the foe from the north, but in his discussion of the alternate dates for the beginning of Jeremiah’s ministry—whether early in Josiah’s reign or much later—Thompson seems reluctant to make a choice.

The actual commentary is arranged in a helpful way. Each pericope is translated by Thompson with the textual notes as footnotes at the bottom of the page. The commentary follows directly after the translation. Thus one does not have to thumb back and forth through the volume to find out the reason for a certain translation. The textual notes are generally adequate, though textual critics would probably appreciate more extensive discussion of the textual variants.

The great strength of this commentary is its lucid and balanced presentation of the present state of research in Jeremiah. If one must point to a weakness, paradoxically it grows out of that very strength. Thompson’s work opens up no new ground; it is derivative, not original. Sometimes his quest for balance actually leaves the reader confused. When did Jeremiah’s ministry begin in Thompson’s view? Nonetheless, as a thorough, up-to-date commentary on Jeremiah which presents the issues clearly and weighs current solutions thoughtfully and fairly, one can recommend this work as unrivaled.

J.J.M. ROBERTS

*Israel and the Aramaeans of Damascus*, by Merrill F. Unger. Baker Book

House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1980. Pp. 189. \$5.95.

Merrill F. Unger's classic work on the history of the Aramaeans of Damascus was first published in 1957 by James Clark & Co. This is a photolithographic reprint. Scholarship has not stood still in the intervening period of almost a quarter century. Thus the work is in some respects dated, and Kenneth Barker's very brief introduction to the work makes only partial compensation for this. In addition to citing more recent bibliography, he points out a number of areas in which Unger's work must be corrected, updated, or at least reexamined. That is not the same as a thorough revision of the work in the light of new discoveries, however, and such a revision is what is needed.

Nonetheless, one must be thankful to Baker Book House for making this classic available again. It may be dated, but nothing has appeared in the interim to replace it. Until a new synthesis appears, this will remain a standard and very valuable text for students in the field.

J.J.M. ROBERTS

*Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament*, by Joachim Becker (trans. by David E. Green). Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1980. Pp. 96. \$7.95.

The purpose of this compact volume, first published in German in 1977 (*Messiaserwartung im Alten Testament*), is to examine critically the assumption made by the New Testament, the church's tradition and traditional apologetics, according to Becker, that there is in the Old Testament a continuous stream of messianic expectation and prediction. Becker begins his book by outlining briefly the nature of this assumption based on a string of Old Testament texts from Genesis 3:15 to the seventh chapter of Daniel. The rest of the book, save for the final chapter, is given to showing that none of the texts which are cited by those believing that the Old Testament expects or predicts a Messiah can be interpreted messianically, using historical methods. In the final chapter Becker tells us that, although the Old Testament nowhere expects a Messiah,

we must nevertheless as Christians "find Christ at every stop on our way through the history of Israel and the Old Testament" (p. 96), because the inspired witness of the New Testament imposes this duty upon us.

It is among the more striking omissions of this book that the author fails to inform us just what is meant by "Messiah." It would strengthen his argument that the Messiah is not to be found in the Old Testament if he told us for what we should be looking. We are given to assume that Messiah is to be defined in this study as conforming to the notions of the New Testament, the church's tradition and traditional apologetics. But as Becker acknowledges, these notions are not identical and perhaps not compatible. For that reason we find ourselves at the outset with no clear idea of what we are seeking or how we will know if we have found it.

The argument of the book itself seems to be troubled by some further unclarity. On the one hand Becker argues that a critical examination of the Old Testament texts shows that there was no consistent development or evolution of messianic ideas in Israel. For support of this claim he appeals to the opposition to the monarchy which is apparent in numerous Old Testament texts, and to the historical problems in the Deuteronomist's portrayal of David as a sovereign over all Israel. This evidence, he believes, shows that the position of the Davidic dynasty, presumably the *sine qua non* of any messianic ideas, was too insecure to foster such ideas even in the period of the monarchy. Furthermore, he claims, even in the post-exilic period, when messianism should be flourishing, there is no evidence of any such development. Thus the claim that the period from David to the threshold of the New Testament was one of intensifying messianic consciousness is without historical support.

On the other hand, Becker seems content at points to argue that the Old Testament does not *predict* the Messiah but that the New Testament is simply the fulfillment of earlier "visionary predictions" (p. 29). These two arguments are completely different and it is unfortunate that Becker did not distinguish them. The latter claim, that the Old Testament did not, in a strict sense, predict the Messiah, is something of a red herring since few contemporary scholars

would argue to the contrary. However, the former claim, that there is no evidence for a consistent development of messianic ideas in ancient Israel, is considerably more complex. To support it Becker seems to play down far too much the implicit messianism of the royal Psalms and passages such as Isaiah 9 and 11. To admit to such implicit messianism would have made his concluding point, that there is a "messianic luminosity" in Israel's history, far less startling and in less apparent contradiction to the book's major argument.

Despite these qualifications Becker's book can be recommended as a guide to the principal issues in the debate insofar as Old Testament scholarship affects them. In fewer than one hundred pages Becker delivers to the reader an overview of a vast amount of Old Testament research. [This research would have been made even more accessible if the book had been provided with indexes.] Of course, some of his positions are quite unlikely, e.g. that the early Israelite opposition to kingship arose because they were semi-nomads, that Nathan was a Jebusite, that Exodus 15:18 and Psalm 68:25 are post-exilic, or that Psalm 72 addresses the nation and not the king.

Becker concludes his book by seeking a synthesis of the historical approach which he has used throughout his book and the "witness of the New Testament." This synthesis can be given, he says, only in the "light of faith" (p. 93). But the synthesis he proposes is more of a juxtaposition: the historical study of the Bible must be done alongside the faithful reading of it. Thus, despite the results reached in his study of the Old Testament, Becker insists that we must accept the New Testament's claim to be the fulfillment of the Old on the authority of the New Testament itself. Unfortunately, Becker's approach gives us too little help in understanding that New Testament claim.

To conclude on a positive note, it seems to me that Becker, a Roman Catholic Professor of Old Testament in the Netherlands, has made a positive and essential contribution to the study of the Bible by showing clearly that historical-critical study does not serve well an apologetic function, and that, more profoundly, the Messiah of the New Testament does not appear as the culmination and fulfillment of an unbroken histori-

cal sequence, but as the gracious and surprising act of God.

BEN C. OLLENBURGER

*New Testament Studies, Philological, Versional, and Patristic* (New Testament Tools and Studies, vol. X), by Bruce M. Metzger. E. J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands, 1980. Pp. x + 234. Gld. 68.

Those who know the charm with which Professor Metzger presents even his most technical studies will be glad to see a group of his papers, previously scattered in various periodicals and honorific volumes, now conveniently assembled. Among the 13 items one may mention especially a judicious summary of the question of "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha" (chapter I), and three on the value of patristic quotations for the text of the New Testament, which has been both minimized and exaggerated (chapters XI-XIII). It is interesting to note that textual criticism goes as far back as the late second century, when Irenaeus observed that older and better manuscripts supported 666 rather than 616 for the number of the Beast in the Apocalypse (p. 190). Somewhat amusing are "Names for the Nameless in the New Testament" (chapter II), as added in tradition. Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar for the Magi are the best known, but there are many others. Even within the Gospels the unnamed servant of the High Priest becomes Malchus in John 18:10, while contrariwise Simon of Cyrene's sons, Alexander and Rufus (Mark 15:21) disappear from Matthew and Luke (p. 43). "The Problematic Thracian Version of the Gospels" (chapter X) is apparently a phantom produced from rhetorical lists of languages in which the Gospel had been preached. Of some theological significance is the demonstration that the erratic reading of Matthew 1:16 in the Sinaitic Syriac version ("Joseph begat Jesus") has no solid support (chapter VII)—a scribe probably absent-mindedly repeated the formula, "A begat Y." Similarly there's no grammatical reason why Romans 9:5 shouldn't indeed refer to Jesus as "God over all" (chapter IV). "An Early Coptic Manuscript of the Gospel Ac-



cording to Matthew" (chapter VI) gives a text almost as old as the great Greek codices, and has attached to it a form of the *Gloria in Excelsis* in Greek and Coptic, with a possibly Gnostic expansion before the final doxology. An Appendix describes a valuable Lexicon of Christian Iconography, the use of which, however, apart from its illustrations, will be limited to those for whom German imposes no obstacle. Readers of this BULLETIN are certainly glad to be counted among the friends of Bruce Metzger, and to welcome this collection of his always interesting contributions.

EDWARD R. HARDY

Jesus College  
Cambridge, Eng.

*The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative*, by Frank Kermode. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1979. Pp. xv + 169. \$10.00.

*The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description with Social Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein*, by Anthony C. Thiselton. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1980. Pp. xx + 484. \$12.95.

These two books, different in many respects, are alike in giving consideration to hermeneutics as applied to the New Testament. They differ in that Kermode, who is King Edward VII Professor of English Literature at Cambridge University, approaches the subject from the point of view of literary analysis, while Thiselton, who is Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at Sheffield University, is concerned with philosophical description.

As would be expected from the author of several widely-acclaimed literary analyses, Kermode's book is urbane and elegant in conception and style. He investigates the art of interpretation of a literary narrative, in this case, the Gospel according to Mark. He inquires how far the evangelist reveals and how far he conceals meanings.

Within the context of examples drawn from English literature, Kermode examines some enigmatic passages in the Second Gospel, including the much debated statement in 4:11 f. ("To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but to those outside everything is in parables, so that they may indeed see but not perceive . . ."). With regard to Jesus' parables, the author concludes that they "may proclaim a truth as a herald does, and at the same time conceal truth like an oracle" (p. 47). It is this double function, the simultaneous proclamation and concealment of narratives, that engages Kermode's attention as he examines the enigmatic account of the young man in a linen cloth at the time of the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark 14:51-52). Who is he and what function does the account have in the Gospel as a whole?

In this connection, Kermode discusses Morton Smith's views concerning the secret Gospel of Mark mentioned in the recently discovered fragment of a letter attributed to Clement of Alexandria. Although Kermode finds Smith's explanation of Jesus as a magician who indoctrinates the young man in a nocturnal sacrament too imaginative, he allows that the puzzling incident in Mark may well have more behind it than meets the eye.

Another problem that engages Kermode's attention is the question of the ending(s) of Mark's Gospel. As in his earlier book, *The Sense of Ending*, he discusses the reader's expectations of endings: "We can derive a sense of fulfilled expectation, of satisfactory closure, from texts that actually do not provide what we ask, but give us instead something that, out of pure desire for completion, we are prepared to regard as a metaphor or a synecdoche for the ending that is not there" (p. 65). How far and in what way does the interpreter's view of Mark's Gospel as a whole depend on the function of the ending(s) of the account?

In another chapter Kermode explores the question of the presence in Mark of midrash, that is, fictive accounts of episodes in the life of Jesus made up by the evangelist on the basis of Old Testament passages taken as evangelic testimonies. Does the repeated use of the verb "fulfill" in the Passion narrative, referring to Old Testament texts, really mean "derive from," so that what we read



as a convincing narrative convinces mainly because it is well-formed and followable?

In the final chapter Kermode considers the eight or nine instances of "flash-back" in Mark, what structuralists are fond of calling heterodiegetic analysis. For example, why does Mark intercalate the story of the woman with the hemorrhage into the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter (5:21-43)? Did he do so because it happened like that, or is there some hidden meaning in dovetailing the story of a woman who had been sick for twelve years with that of a girl who was twelve years of age? The twinned narratives tell of a woman who is ritually unclean so long as her hemorrhage continues and of a girl, dead or supposed dead, who is also unclean, or supposed unclean; both are restored by an exercise of power by one who is superior to all such disabilities. How much of this pattern of parallels and antitheses should be dismissed as coincidence, and how much reflects the evangelist's intention to replicate, in parallel episodes, some features of the whole discourse? The author confesses that "once we begin to look at matters this way we shall find no lack of density and occult relation" (p. 134).

Throughout this book, comprising the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University in 1977-78, Kermode shows himself to be *au courant* with technical New Testament scholarship. His obvious capability as a *litterateur* assists him in no small degree as he examines features of the Second Gospel. At the same time, one senses a degree of scepticism whether we can know what was the intention of the evangelist. "Once a text is credited with high authority," Kermode comments, "it is studied intensely; once it is so studied it acquires mystery and secrecy" (p. 144); he therefore remains doubtful that narrative has any more than intertextual meaning. Kermode's concluding words are pessimistic: "World and book, it may be, are hopelessly plural, endlessly disappointing; we stand alone before them, aware of their arbitrariness and impenetrability, knowing that they may be narratives only because of our impudent intervention, and susceptible of interpretation only by our hermetic tricks" (p. 145).

In comparison with Kermode's lectures, polished and often brilliantly phrased, Thiselton's tome may at first sight appear to be

plodding and repetitious. It is, however, no less erudite and, despite the closely-knit argument involving what may seem to some to be a jungle of philosophical debate, its chapters are developed with clear and comprehensive scholarship. Certainly in its overall impact it is much more optimistic than Kermode's book as to the possibility of knowing and understanding statements made in the Bible, particularly in the Epistles of Paul.

Questions concerning hermeneutics cannot be dealt with properly, Thiselton argues, until one raises prior questions concerning the nature of knowledge, the use of language, and the scientific and ontological presuppositions operative in the mind of the interpreter. The hermeneutical task, therefore, involves the attempt to fuse two horizons: that of the original writer, who formulated what he had to say within a particular historical and intellectual context, and that of contemporary interpreters, who also have a field of vision in which they respond to what they read.

Thiselton's book gives an excellent survey of hermeneutics and also assesses the limits of the contribution that philosophy can make to our interpretation of the Scriptures. The issues raised here are numerous and complex, but the author has an enviable ability to expound difficult ideas in a clear and helpful manner. He also has a keen mind and critical insight that weighs carefully the shortcomings of views that he analyzes.

After an introductory account of the nature and scope of the subject, directing attention chiefly to the interrelation of the views of Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein, the author considers broader issues in New Testament hermeneutics. These include, first of all, the issue of historical distance. The positivism of Ernst Troeltsch reappears in Dennis Nineham's insistence that "the pastness of the past" prevents our taking the New Testament as relevant to our situation today. Nineham argues that since, for example, in antiquity people believed that illness was caused by demons, the very *experience* of illness and healing would amount to something different from the *experience* of parallel events today. Necessarily this means, he argues, a lack of hermeneutical continuity with the past that cannot be overcome by appeals to continuity

in human nature or to the use of sympathetic imagination.

Of the six criticisms that Thiselton levels against Nineham's view, one of the most telling is the charge that he exaggerates the problem of historical distance in a manner that classicists and ancient historians in general would consider unjustified. Such scholars (for example, in a literature seminar on the poetry of ancient Greece) work on the reasonable assumption that meaningful engagement will occur between the horizons of the text and those of the modern reader. Furthermore, Nineham's radically relativistic view of human nature raises more problems than it solves. "If the experience of illness and healing in the ancient world," Thiselton urges, "is something that has no continuity with what goes under the same name today, what are we to say about acts of love, self-sacrifice, holiness, faith, or of sin, rebellion, lack of trust, and so on?" (p. 60). Cultural differences do not prevent the impact of teachings like "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but they who humble themselves will be exalted" (Luke 18:14), or "what does it profit to gain the whole world and forfeit one's life?" (Mark 8:36). In other words, great teaching has a power of reaching across the frontiers of culture with a meaning that speaks to human needs at a level deeper than the cultural differences.

In subsequent chapters Thiselton examines hermeneutics and language in the light of the semantic investigations of Ricoeur, Petersen, and Nida, as well as the relation between thought and language and its bearing on pre-understanding as set forth by Whorf, Saussure, and Wittgenstein. These considerations lead to the largest section of the book, an examination of Bultmann's hermeneutics in the context of influences from Heidegger, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein.

It is particularly in his discussion of the argument about private language and public criteria of meaning that Thiselton's book reaches a milestone. Wittgenstein observed that "a child must learn the use of color before it can ask for the name of a color." This is the point behind Wittgenstein's memorable aphorism, "If a lion could talk, we could not understand him." It is in such a context that Thiselton writes:

What is being said is that concepts like "being redeemed," "being spoken by God," and so on, are made intelligible and "teachable" not on the basis of private existential experience but on the basis of a public tradition of certain patterns of behavior. . . . If with Bultmann we substitute an emphasis on the other-worldly and "my" existential experience in place of the public tradition of Old Testament history, the problem of hermeneutics becomes insoluble (p. 382). . . . It is part of the grammar of the concept of "God" that he is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob (p. 385).

In other words, Thiselton implies that the Church is not merely a series of generations of Christians, each encased in its own setting of time and culture; it is rather a community of experience reaching across the generations so that the language of symbolism which it uses can evoke the past in a way that strikes a chord in the experience of the present.

Although the argument in these sections may require more than one reading, Thiselton manages to weave together a net of philosophical discourse the meshes of which enclose a wide variety of problems. And his critical appraisal of the validity or the sophistry of this or that view is invariably fair and properly nuanced.

In the final section Thiselton examines various statements contained in the Pauline Epistles in the light of Wittgenstein's insistence upon correct grammatical clarifications and observations. (Here Wittgenstein uses "grammatical" in a distinctive way; for example, he writes, "You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed."—That is a grammatical remark.) In an exceptionally rewarding discussion of the relation of the meaning of faith as set forth by Paul and by James, Thiselton concludes, "Faith is not a special kind of work, but part of what is *entailed* in being united with Christ as part of the new creation. Faith does not *make* a man a Christian; but he cannot be a Christian without faith, for faith in Christ is part of the definition of what it means to be a Christian" (p. 423).

The foregoing comments and quotations are sufficient to show that Thiselton's vol-

ume is a piece of research of the highest order. He is not pessimistic about the possibility of true apprehension of the truths expressed in the Bible. He does not emphasize so much what we *ought* to do in order to interpret the Bible, but what *in fact* we do whenever we interpret it. This book will help us grasp what is involved when we hear God speaking through the Bible today.

BRUCE M. METZGER

*The Reformed Roots of the English New Testament; The Influence of Theodore Beza on the English New Testament*, by Irena Doruta Backus. Preface by Basil Hall (The Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series, 28; ed. by Dikran Y. Hadidian). The Pickwick Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 1980. Pp. xxii + 216. \$9.90.

In this book, a revision of the author's D.Phil. thesis written under the supervision of the late Dr. S. L. Greenslade at Oxford, the author investigates the nature and amount of influence exerted by Theodore Beza upon the translation of the English New Testament, particularly the Authorized or King James Version of 1611. She first examines Beza's influence, particularly in doctrinal matters, on the English version of the Bible published at Geneva in 1560—a subject which has occasionally attracted the attention of historians of the English Bible. The new feature of Mrs. Backus' work in this connection is her examination of the Bodleian copy of the 1602 Bishops' Bible. This copy, which is one of the forty-two copies of the Bishops' Bible that were given to the members of the King James' committee for use in their work of revision of that version, contains many annotations written in the margins by an unknown member of the committee. On the basis of a careful comparison of these emendations in the Synoptic Gospels with Beza's 1598 edition of the Greek and Latin New Testament, Mrs. Backus concludes that "the influence of Beza in the AV Synoptic Gospels is considerable, especially in matters of text and style" (p. xvii).

In a following chapter Mrs. Backus deals with the influence of Beza on several of the Epistles in the King James Version. Here she makes use of Prof. Ward Allen's edition of the Fulman Ms. (which represents a copy of the Final Revision Committee's translation-notes written down by John Bois; see the present writer's review of Allen's book in the *PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN*, LXIII, 1 [1970], p. 111). Among her findings she discovers that Beza had a crucial influence on the AV Epistles so far as text and style are concerned, while in matters of doctrine the Revisers tended to moderate Beza's more extreme pronouncements.

In an appendix (pp. 173-201), Mrs. Backus provides a short but valuable biography of Laurence Tomson (1539-1608), a member of the English "Presbyterian" party and secretary to Sir Francis Walsingham (then Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State). In 1576 Tomson published a revision of the Geneva New Testament, introducing many alterations in text and annotations that he derived from Beza's Latin version of 1565. Tomson's work, despite several idiosyncracies (such as the pedantic rendering of the Greek definite article by "that," for example, "He that hath *that* Son hath *that* life: and he that hath not *that* Son of God hath not *that* life," I John 5:12), was so highly regarded that by 1587 it was accepted as the New Testament in many editions of the Geneva Bible, replacing Whittingham's original rendering in that version. According to Mrs. Backus, in his translation, Tomson "shows a large measure of agreement with the Geneva version, although he is more 'Bezan' than the Geneva translators in his [annotations] on the Eucharist and original sin. His views on the latter are incorporated into the AV margin, although, generally speaking, his influence on the AV is not significantly different from that of the Geneva version" (p. 197).

Mrs. Backus' monograph, attractively reproduced from typescript, is a scholarly contribution to the historical study of the making of the English versions of the Bible. Her careful analyses enable us for the first time accurately to estimate the nature and extent of the influence of Beza on the Geneva and King James Versions of the New Testament.

BRUCE M. METZGER



*The Age of Structuralism: Lévi-Strauss to Foucault*, by Edith Kurzweil. Columbia University Press, New York, NY, 1980. Pp. xi + 256. \$20.00 (cloth); \$5.95 (paper).

This book is about structuralism *à la mode*, an intellectual movement in vogue in France during the period of the sixties and seventies. It presents a fascinating overview of structuralist ideology as it was linked to the events and debates of its time. It includes the panorama of events that occurred during this period, from the student revolt in 1968 to the invasion of Hungary by Russia. It also alludes to significant personal and social crises, from Ricoeur's withdrawal from the University of Nanterre to Lacan's break with French and American psychoanalysts. Far from being a series of abstruse discussions, the survey is comprised of a group of vignettes of French thinkers, each rehearsing the important events in the life of the scholar, his contribution to the debate centered upon structuralism, and a critique of the particular intellectual stance that he adopted. Besides those who were influenced by Lévi-Strauss (Althusser, Lacan, Barthes, and Foucault), it includes three scholars who were opposed to structuralism (Lefebvre, Ricoeur, and Touraine). The survey offers a rich sample of French intellectual cuisine, even if, at times, the noise and hubbub of the public cafeteria of French politics sometimes detracts from the enjoyment of this exotic fare.

The evaluative comment in the introduction and conclusion takes the form of an obituary. "Structuralism as originally conceived by Lévi-Strauss is dead," writes the author. The structuralist period is nearly over in Paris; it was a part of French thought during the desperate years. Since the hidden structures sought did not emerge, the methodology has undergone continual change and improvement. Disagreement among structuralists mounted until the search for structures began to appear as its own end. If the endless transformations of structuralism were difficult to follow, its successor, semiotics, seems even more difficult to decipher. Semiotics, which has replaced semiology, is to be associated with the post-structuralist debate. Finally, this movement,

which demonstrates the fantastic intellectual virtuosity of French thinkers, can be accounted for partly by the difference between the intellectual traditions of France and America. Nevertheless, to those who wish to understand the post structuralist hermeneutical debate or the development of semiotics, an understanding of structuralism is essential.

The important question that must be addressed to this obituary is "What, precisely, is 'dead'?" Is structuralism dead? Not at all. Characterized in the broadest terms, structuralism is a mode of inquiry that searches for immanent structures or constructs models which have as their object knowledge about the relations between things. It is motivated by a similar principle of inquiry that informs the biological sciences and is operative in French (Greimas) and American (Chomsky) linguistics. Is the research of Lévi-Strauss or his contribution to the science of anthropology dead? By no means. In his earlier studies, particularly in the essay, "The Structural Study of Myth," what eventually paved the way for the acceptance of structuralism (in *Structural Anthropology*), Lévi-Strauss concentrated on the structure of mythology. Subsequently, he shifted his interest to the problem of the description of the mythological world, focusing upon the formal properties of its synchronic structure. His most productive contribution lay in the field of comparative mythology, where he opened a new avenue of research between the universal mythology of Frazer and those for whom each myth was unique. This path is already being followed by M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, whose exploration of Greek mythology is challenging the timeworn tenets of classical research.

What is "dead" is the attempt of Lévi-Strauss to uncover deep universal mental structures that underly human thought and that manifest themselves in man's social, intellectual, and psychological relations. Since the structuralists surveyed in this book appropriated this insight, to a greater or lesser degree, this qualification may seem to nullify their research. Yet the principal difficulty here is not in the claim to universality but in the lack of genuine collaboration between the disciplines represented and



structuralism. Each scholar assumed that his own field was sufficient as the basis to study and explain reality, at least within its own sphere of scientific activity, and that structural insights could simply be appropriated and assimilated into the discipline. For example, in the field of psychology Lacan adopts linguistic principles from Saussure when, in fact, this approach to linguistics contains an inherently anti-psychological predisposition. With the passing of structuralist ideology, perhaps a genuine collaboration between the scientific methodology of structural analysis and the varied disciplines that it has touched will be restored.

Although made aware of the distinction between structuralist philosophy and methodology by Boudon, the author focuses exclusively on ideological developments related to the epoch of structuralism. Therefore, changes in structuralist ideology and endless revisions of structuralist methodology are attributed to the fact that hidden structures did not emerge. However, as a scientific attitude informing research, structuralism retains its validity. Naturally, in the development of a new scientific approach, as new procedures are utilized to discover and correlate immanent structures, they are constantly revised or even discarded. This approach parallels research in the biological sciences and reveals the real contribution of the structuralist insights of Lévi-Strauss and the American linguist, Noam Chomsky. Also, hidden structures have emerged, as, for instance, componential analysis in the field of linguistics has shown.

The religious dimensions of the survey appear in the struggles between the existentialists, represented by Sartre, the Marxists, Althusser and Lefebvre, the structuralists and those who repudiated structuralist ideology or its political overtones. Among the latter is Paul Ricoeur, the Christian philosopher, now as active in America as in France and currently associated with the field of hermeneutics. The survey treats his work seriously, sketching his early period of political involvement in France, his move to the American scene, and his increasing concern with the hermeneutical issues surrounding the structuralist and post-structuralist debate.

At the conclusion of the study Ricoeur's

critique of Lévi-Strauss, dated to an essay written in 1973 but really going back to his interview with the French anthropologist some years ago, reveals his perennial difficulty with structuralism, that it discovers structures (and not God). This has spilled over into his appraisal of semiotics, even though he is more preoccupied with its concerns than ever before. Semiotics does not seek to construct a comprehensive hermeneutic but attempts to discover the structural properties of the narrative at every level. By means of an operatory methodology free of extra-linguistic presuppositions, it protects its homogeneity and thereby maintains its scientific status. But the two disciplines, semiotics and hermeneutics, share an interpretative task, and neither can proceed without interpretation. However, once the task of the semiotician, to clarify a text by uncovering the structures through which its meaning is articulated, is completed, its result can be assimilated into the larger philosophical and religious enterprise of hermeneutics.

By the conclusion of the survey the reader gets the impression that this rich feast of French thought has created a case of intellectual indigestion for the author. Facing the difficulties of semiotics, which "superimposes its own complexity on structuralist concepts," she retreats to intellectual differences between the French and Americans as a partial explanation. We are empirical; they are philosophical. Yet it was the empirical thrust of Noam Chomsky, the American linguist, that contributed to the development of structuralism. Again, the *mélange* of social and intellectual ideas in vogue in France and scientific discoveries that were of much more permanent validity makes it difficult for the reader to sort out genuine scientific contributions from more ephemeral aspects of the ideological debates. Nevertheless, the descriptions of the eight thinkers retain their integrity, and several of them are superbly done. The author is at her best when chronicling events, describing empirical contributions, and tracing interactions between them, less effective when exploring the theoretical dimensions of their research. Edith Kurzweil has produced an interesting description of an important period of intellectual growth, a survey that represents a significant com-

pendium combining the research of a leading group of French thinkers with their responses to the political events and ideological debates of their epoch.

GLENDON E. BRYCE

College of the Holy Cross  
Worcester, MA

*Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, by Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman (The Anchor Bible, vol. 24). Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, NY, 1980. Pp. xvii + 701. \$14.00.

This massive treatment of Hosea will reward the careful and diligent study of biblical scholars, but it will certainly confuse and confound "the general reader with no special formal training in biblical studies," for whom primarily the Anchor Bible is intended. The language of this commentary is highly technical ("... the contrastive-distinctive distributional syntax of asseverative *l'* and negative *l'* has not been discovered."), the argumentation often dependent on detailed knowledge of Hebrew, and the discussion much too long and repetitive. The authors devote, e.g., ten tortured pages to a discussion of their translation, "take for yourself a promiscuous wife" (1:2). That translation is apt enough and means, the authors say, that the wife is not a "promiscuous woman who becomes a wife," but rather "a wife who becomes promiscuous." Such a promiscuous woman, they explain, "is one who has misbehaved frequently and in the same fashion for a considerable length of time" (p. 159). So where are we? They conclude that "Gomer was not promiscuous when Hosea married her."

Hosea is admittedly a confusing book, much of it so obscure that many scholars have long considered its text to be almost hopelessly corrupt. Anderson and Freedman, then, may be pardoned if their painstaking commentary reflects some of that confusion; perhaps Hosea is not a book for the general reader. Nevertheless, a comparison of the RSV of Hosea with the translation in this book reveals the comparative clarity, beauty and comprehensible structure of the former. The new translation can not bear reading

aloud; and the commentary is directed to specialists who are familiar with the literary and exegetical problems of the Hebrew text.

Those biblical scholars will find this book provocative and many of its suggestions persuasive. Most will applaud the authors' informed and informing discussion, as well as the great respect which they pay to the Masoretic Hebrew text by their determination to make sense of it without recourse to emendation. (The index refers under "emendations" to the few textual changes the authors have accepted.) Many may also find useful the attention given to statistical efforts at distinguishing prose from poetry (pp. 57-66), the acceptance of "rhetorical oratory" as a literary genre (p. 132) and the structural observations defining discrete prophetic sections (pp. 316ff.). Some will agree that Hosea's trust in God's love did give him inspiration for his struggle to love Gomer, rather than that his love for Gomer gave him a clue to God's love for Israel (p. 70f.). On other points there will be more disagreement. The argumentation, e.g., that sees every clause in 1:6b-7 negated is ingenious if not convincing, and the translation of *l'* in 11:9 as an asseverative rather than a negative will provoke disbelief.

The authors dispense with presenting a summary of Hosea's thought; they are critical of the helpfulness of form-criticism for elucidating the prophetic message, and they insist that Hosea 4-14 is a "literary composition," that is "all of a piece" (p. 316). This latter, they admit, is "an approach," not "a provable conclusion"; and their method and hypothesis are again ingenious though contrived. Their work provides a welcome study of what one scholar called "the insuperable obstacles" to an interpretation of Hosea, but their commentary leaves one still in great darkness about the prophet's intent and meaning. The discussion of Hosea 3 (pp. 291-309) provides a representative sample of the authors' method. Serious students will find the book illuminating on innumerable points and will also be immersed in current scholarly method for understanding the Old Testament, but the authors provide no convenient conspectus for the idle or half-serious who want a usable survey.

Complete bibliography, excellent indexes, and 11 illustrations of doubtful helpfulness

round out this study. The book is well produced (edit eighth-century on p. 54 and These effects on p. 141) and is a bargain at today's book prices.

JOHN H. MARKS

Princeton University

*Genesis 12-50*, Commentary by Robert Davidson (The Cambridge Bible Commentary, New English Bible). Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 1979. Pp. xiv + 323. \$6.75 (paper).

With the publication of this volume and its companion, 1 and 2 Esdras, the Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible is complete. The New Testament part of the series was finished in 1967. Intended for the general reader and especially for secondary school and college teachers, the series assumes no specialized knowledge or familiarity with biblical criticism, history or theology. Nothing is taken for granted as the authors present the results of modern scholarship to their readers in keeping with that format. This volume clearly and coherently threads an interesting way through the historical, literary and theological problems of Genesis 12-50; and it should be an invaluable guide for ministers and teachers who need basic help. Its one page note on further reading is an admirable pointer to the kinds of scholarly help that are readily available to the layman.

JOHN H. MARKS

*The Book of Job*, A New Translation (according to the traditional Hebrew text). Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, PA, 1980. Pp. xxiii + 63. \$6.50.

This translation will be included in the forthcoming *Kethubim—The Writings*, which will complete the new Jewish Publication Society's translation of the Hebrew Bible. It presents in parallel columns the Masoretic Hebrew text and the English rendering, following three brief introductory essays. In them Nahum M. Sarna (Brandeis University) discusses the literary structure of

Job and its place in the biblical canon; Jonas C. Greenfield (Hebrew University) introduces the language of the book; and Moshe Greenberg (Hebrew University) offers reflections on Job's theology. The work is marked by a conservative commitment to the Masoretic text, preservation of the Hebrew imagery, and what the authors call "modern literary English." Their attitude is revealed in the frequently recurring footnote: "Meaning of Hebrew uncertain."

JOHN H. MARKS

*Galatians and Romans*, by Frank Stagg (Knox Preaching Guides, ed. by John H. Hayes). John Knox Press, Atlanta, GA, 1980. Pp. 128. \$4.50.

This guide to Galatians and Romans written by New Testament scholar Frank Stagg of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, is one of the first to appear in the Knox Preaching Guide Series. According to the publisher's advertising these books are not intended to be formal commentaries but rather resource guides which will "provide competent aid to pastors in moving from the Biblical text to the contemporary sermon."

Following the general format of the series Professor Stagg provides short introductions to both Galatians and Romans. He then covers the main outlines of the Pauline messages under consideration, giving hints for sermon topics along the way. Annotated bibliographies list a few commentaries and articles for further study.

In such a brief volume the author can do little more than touch on the broad expansive themes of the biblical books. And he has no space at all to argue the case and highlight various shades of understanding for the interpretations given. This brevity often results in an appearance of superficiality, especially for those who might not share Professor Stagg's theological perspective. For instance, some readers might be surprised by Stagg's assertions that divine sovereignty applies only to God's control over divine and not human destiny (p. 94); that substitution as an aspect of Christ's atonement is repudiated by the book of Galatians (pp. 15, 17); and that God's wrath is his passive permission for mankind to



suffer their self-chosen fate (p. 51). Perhaps with more room for argumentation or qualification such insights would be convincing; however, as it stands they must simply be taken at face value. But if this book is convincing only to those already in agreement with the interpretations given, then its usefulness as a guide to understanding the text is diminished.

As an aid to homiletical creativity Stagg's little book has some potential. Because of space limitations the sermonic treatment is very brief and uneven—sometimes a "theme" is given, sometimes a "title" or two are suggested, and sometimes a sketch of an outline is provided. Furthermore, there is little consistency as to how such themes are derived from the text—sometimes it is based on what Paul says, sometimes on how he says it, and sometimes on Paul's faith which produced the text. Yet these assorted hints might help jog the preacher's creative processes into coming up with an original approach, related to the preacher's own congregation.

Many aspects of this book are attractive. Professor Stagg's writing breathes a spirit of devotional scholarship. His sermonic suggestions indicate a desire for preaching which is true to both text and congregation. Furthermore, Stagg's treatment of controversial theological issues in Galatians and Romans is bold without being cavalier, proclamatory without covering up interpretive difficulties.

But finally it is hard to be sure just who might profit from this brief guide. Presumably seminary graduates already have the ability to develop such elementary interpretation and homiletic movement on their own using standard resources. Maybe the value of this type of guide will be as an aid to lay preachers or Bible study leaders who have had only minimal theological and biblical training. Perhaps for them the shortness of treatment will not diminish its significance.

CARL E. ZYLSTRA

Graduate School  
Princeton Theological Seminary

*The Man in the Manse, 1800-1900*, by Ronald S. Blakey. Columbia University Press, New York, NY, 1979. Pp. 160. \$10.00.

Ronald S. Blakey, minister of triple-linked parishes in the Scottish Borders, sets out to give a personality sketch of the brotherhood of ministers in the nineteenth century. He reminds us of the sometimes forgotten incidents that indicate the vitality of the Church in Scotland. He does so by illustrations drawn largely from biographies and parish histories.

It may well be that the Scottish Church almost came of age in the nineteenth century. The Great Disruption of 1843 is an example of the break with the paternalistic authority of Patronage; a tyranny which had developed to the point of absurdity. Princeton's president, James McCosh was typical of those who left the Auld Kirk to become the Free Kirk. By their act of rebellion the parish ministers demonstrated the effective qualities of their leadership both for and against the Disruption. Five hundred ministers walked out with their congregations leaving their buildings and their bank accounts behind them. Out of 25,000 members in Sutherland only 219 stayed within the Established Kirk. The rivalry between the two factions is well illustrated by the chant of children:

"The Free Kirk the wee Kirk,  
The Kirk without a steeple."

the response to which was:

"The Auld Kirk the cauld Kirk,  
The Kirk without the people."

A second sign of maturity was the heresy trials, the best remembered being that of John McLeod Campbell of Rue in the Gair Loch. Because of his position on the Atonement he was deposed by the General Assembly in 1831. The maturity, perhaps, was not in the judgement of the Assembly, but in the response of his congregation, 95% of whom expressed their loyalty to, and affection for, him. He continued to preach; and to larger crowds than ever in tents, moors, graveyards, and city halls. The quality of his faith obviously meant more to his listeners than the exactness of his doctrinal orthodoxy.

The third sign was the three-stage revival beginning in 1839, expanding in 1858, and preparing the way for the visits of



Moody and Sankey in 1873, 1881, and 1891. The first phase was initiated by ministers of the Auld (Established) Kirk such as Robert Murray McCheyne; the second phase was the work of lay evangelists who travelled from parish to parish at the invitation of parish ministers. In their period the Free Kirk gave wholehearted support to the movement. Again it was its ministers of the calibre of Andrew Bonar who organized and participated in the missions of Dwight L. Moody.

The consequence of this age of revival strengthened the Kirk, deepened the devotional life, involved increasing numbers of the people, initiated social reforms, inspired the missionary movement, and integrated Moderates and Evangelicals in a way that they had never been integrated before, and thereby prepared the way for a series of church unions.

It is within the setting of these events that Ronald Blakey helps us to understand the man in the manse. As we might expect, there is no stereotype. There are many manses for many different personalities. Who were these men?

They preached sermons, usually three per Sunday, and several hours in length. A reading of some of the published sermons of that time indicate how well the preparation was done. A brief sermon was one hour. Most sermons were written, and then memorized. Some of the great pulpiteers, however, such as Thomas Chalmers read their sermons and survived rather well. Preparation required at least eleven hours per sermon plus two days given over to the memorizing of them. The greatest sin was to borrow illustrations from another, far less plagiarize the sermon. That was unthinkable. The high and low of preparation is marked perhaps by the places where it occurred; one minister found privacy in the church steeple, and another in bed. Headings were the norm. One minister is recorded as having 86 "heads" to one sermon; at three to five minutes a head, plus an introduction and an ending, one may calculate that it was no brief sermon. There is even evidence that such efforts demonstrated able imaginations. One, for example, preached for an endless series of Sundays on the Red Heifer of the Book of Numbers.

They visited homes to comfort the sick

and to catechize the families. One who carried a pedometer with him averaged over 2,000 miles per annum in distance covered for pastoral visitation.

They supervised the day schools in their parishes. Until 1872 the education of the people was the minister's responsibility. The teachers were either "stickit ministers," i.e., those who had not been successful in finding a charge, or divinity students working their way through their theological colleges.

They initiated the Sunday Schools in the 1760's and built them up to the extent that a Sunday School of over 1,000 was not unusual in the cities.

They taught the minister's class which educated "teenagers" in Christian history, thought, and practice, and prepared them for membership in the church. They initiated the Savings Bank movement so that poor folk could save their bawbees and bank their shillings one by one. Regular banks insisted on a 10 minimum. They raised money for poor relief and ensured that it was administered properly.

They formed libraries for the people, often at their own expense; encouraged the organization of town bands, some of which became famous; supported philosophical societies; established institutions for the mentally sick; schools for juvenile delinquents; rehabilitation houses for prostitutes; lodgings for workers; soup kitchens for the poor; and Sunday breakfasts. They were at the forefront of society, so much so that they were often anxious lest they spent too much time with people and too little with God.

They lived in large manses on small stipends, yet entertained so much that they had to employ servants. Those in the country used their glebe, or farmlands, to the fullest extent. With the help of the whole family they clipped the wool from their sheep, spun it, and wove the cloth which was then tailored into good homespun suits. They fed the presbytery, the session and the poor. They were absentee fathers to their children, yet spent hours in private prayer, often getting up at 4:00 a.m. to ensure they glorified God.

They were human. They played golf, enjoyed theatre, and were expert in the dance. And they earned the criticisms of their peers who believed that there was no room for recreation within the ministry.

The *Man in the Manse* whets the reader's appetite for more information. The industrial revolution peaked about the time of the Disruption and the Revivals. Was there a relationship between the two? The 1707 Treaty of Union left the Scottish people without a Parliament. Did the Church succeed in being the center and dynamic of national life? Did the Church bank the fires of Scottish patriotism and leave its people politically leaderless? These are questions which can only have answers in the judgments of the twentieth century.

ERNEST GORDON

The Chapel  
Princeton University

*Towards the Mountain*, by Alan Paton. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY, 1980. Pp. 320. \$16.95.

The story Alan Paton tells in *Towards the Mountain* (Holy: Isaiah, 11:9) is his story of a Christian man in the world. By right of birth he has roots in the old country although his life is lived in another in a time of change. He has roots also in South Africa, in the land he loves and the people he tried to serve. He is in transit. His background is a fundamentalist one. His father was a Scot from Glasgow, who was a Christadelphian, and a court reporter. In his journey Alan Paton bypasses the Oxford Group, the reason being that it was given to exaggeration. In a way it was deceived by its own propaganda. As a consequence it had a relentless quality about it similar to that of the South African Security Police. Much of his travelling is done in the ranks of the Tac-H; a post-World War I attempt to show the practical qualities of the Christian faith. Its Anglican undertones may well have led him into the Anglican Church as a confirmed member. By no way, however, may such an act be regarded as the end of a pilgrimage or the coming home of the prodigal.

The changing kingdom of this world, in which he is to travel, is that of Afrikanerdom, a kingdom not unlike that of the Irish built from bitter memories of injustice and hopes frustrated. He is a servant of the state: first of all as a teacher and then as

principal of a reformatory school. It was in the Diepkloof Reformatory that much of his travelling becomes obvious, particularly that difficult road which leads from power to servanthood.

What does one do in the prison world? Alan Paton chose not to remain in the security of the accepted state norms, but to initiate reforms for the well-being of his wards. This meant working for better housing, and plumbing, and relations among their small world's inhabitants. Above all it meant tearing down divisive fences to create an open place, and with it experiencing the agony of trust given and trust betrayed. The servant-lesson of John 13 is learned from an Afrikaner, one "who knew that in some way it was his calling to be not the master, but the servant, of the black boys of Diepkloof Reformatory. And that takes some doing."

It is an honest tale that Alan Paton tells. As a man in the world he is subject to all the temptations that flesh and spirit are heir to. He falls by the wayside and he is forgiven by the wife he fails. He studies books, but learns truth from people. Because of such a lesson he realizes that the prevailing views of punishment are inadequate. There is another, "and that is that there need be none at all." One of his models was a Mrs. Jones who chose to serve although it meant an earlier death. He had watched her share her love with the Africans. At her funeral he watched them show their love for her. "As for me, I was overwhelmed. I was seeing a vision, which was never to leave me, illuminating the darkness of the days through which we live now (1944). To speak in raw terms, there was some terrible pain in the pit of my stomach. I could not control it. I had again the overpowering feeling of unspeakable sorrow and unspeakable joy. What life had failed to give so many of these people, this woman had given them—an assurance that their work was known and of good report, that they were not nameless or meaningless, and there is no hunger like this one."

The biggest lesson of all perhaps is the realization that "there is no ease in Zion," because Zion is never established in the present circumstance. Table Mountain and the Holy Mountain are an eternity apart. He is appointed to an Anglican commission to draw up a blueprint for a South African

Zion in 1941. The report was prepared, but apartheid continued, not only continued, but prospered. The ideal and the actual are far apart. To face reality is to live in the tension between the two with confidence and hope. We may visualize how this journey takes place as we see him move from his place as a pacifist to his place as a man involved in the military struggle against tyrannies—but in the lowliest of ways.

With the ambition of becoming Director of Prisons he begins a tour of penal institutions in Britain, Sweden, Norway, and the U.S.A. While he is travelling he begins his career as a writer in the Hotel Bristol, in Trondheim, Norway, and completes it in San Francisco. The book is *Cry, The Beloved Country*. The poetic quality of this novel may be due to two experiences: that "feeling of unspeakable sorrow and unspeakable joy"; and that sense of being grasped by a power greater than oneself. When I first met Alan Paton in Princeton twenty-five years ago one of my students asked him, "To what do you attribute your peculiar style?" The answer was, "To reading the King James version daily." One may see how the story told there has influenced his own.

It does not, however, end with a fanfare of trumpets. That may come later on "the other side." It ends with the irony of the good guys losing. "The Christian rulers of Afrikanerdom began to observe the un-Christian precept that the end justified the means." Thus the Christian man in the world is left to take up arms while possessing neither arms nor armor of a worldly kind. That part of his story is to be continued in Volume II.

ERNEST GORDON

*Intercession*, by Lukas Vischer (Faith and Order Paper, No. 95). World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1980. Pp. 66. \$3.95.

This slim monograph has some meaningful observations about intercession as a strong factor in the life and witness of the church today. "The churches," the author says, "have heard the call to unity. Ought we not to be able, therefore, to anticipate the day of fulfillment by practising mutual

intercession?" (p. 1). "To pray for one another," he adds, "means already to accept one another" (p. 2). This is the nature of the fellowship of the New Testament out of which the church emerged. It is both a promise and a sign of the church's becoming a reconciling factor in the world. As yet intercommunion among the various branches of the Christian church is not a reality generally at the Lord's Table, yet intercessory prayer reaches across these walls of separation and must be continued as an integral part of every liturgical and/or eucharistic celebration. Moreover, each week the focus of a portion of every congregation's program of intercession should be upon the church in some particular part of the world.

This does not mean that intercession is a device by which to achieve unity seemingly by fiat among the churches. It is our human response to an initiative which comes to us from "the ultimate springs of spiritual life" (p. 6).

The author traces the phenomenon of intercession through the Old Testament and its great heroic figures (Chap. III); through the New Testament, especially Jesus, the Advocate with the Father, who becomes THE intercessor in his high priestly prayer in John 17 (Chap. IV); and into the early church with Paul who carried the care of all the churches (Chap. V). Here one finds also a clear statement of the meaning of the priesthood of all believers (p. 46) in which intercession has so great a part. The final chapter addresses two special questions: (i) intercessions of Mary and the Saints and (ii) liturgical intercession for one's own church.

This essay will make good resource material for a study group. Moreover, its challenge is clear that only when our intercessions for the witness of other churches is genuine will the renewal of our own witness be assured.

DONALD MACLEOD

*Preaching Reassessed*, by John Stacey. Epworth Press, London, 1980. Pp. 125. £2.75.

In this book Mr. John Stacey, an English Methodist, examines the nature and func-



tion of Christian preaching at the present day. He begins by defining a good sermon as "one rooted in the Bible interpreted for the twentieth century, finding its ratification in the tradition and experience of the church and the preacher's own experience, and evoking the kind of Christian faith that has an easy relevance to the daily lives of its hearers" (p. 22). He then cites the views of six leading twentieth-century theologians and biblical scholars—P. T. Forsyth, Karl Barth, Ruldolf Bultmann, H. H. Farmer, C. H. Dodd, and Gustav Aulen—who all agree that preaching is central to the Christian enterprise, since it is "a momentous and decisive confrontation of God and his people" (p. 52), which should result in transformation of life and building of Christian character. All too seldom, however, Stacey contends, is this the case today, for with a few exceptions, church services are marked by boredom and declining attendances. This is due not so much to theologians or preachers or even congregations, as to the changed intellectual and social climate of today. For example, uninterrupted monologue is not fashionable in public programs such as those on radio and television; authority figures are at a discount; and secularization has become prominent if not dominant in contemporary culture. Thus the preacher is at a conspicuous disadvantage.

In such unfavorable circumstances, what can Christian preaching do? Stacey argues that its essential and enduring *raison d'être* stems from the need for the articulation of the faith by which the Christian community lives, and the preacher is "the one authorized and commissioned to speak the word that holds the community together" (p. 87). For this important function, three qualifications are necessary: a measure of doctrinal orthodoxy, an empathy towards the religious experiences of fellow Christians, and personal humility.

In discharging his function, the contemporary preacher must of course seek to discover the proper meaning of the Bible, that basic textbook which it is his business to expound; but he must also make biblical truth relevant to the needs of his present-day hearers. That is to say, the question which the preacher must seek to answer is this: "If this passage is part of the total situation in which God is active in Christ, how will that same God,

through that same Christ, deal with us today?" (p. 104). To do this adequately, the preacher must not only seek to think theologically, but he must also be an authentic interpreter of Christian experience, his own and that of his congregation. This, of course, can be done only with the help of the Holy Spirit, for "the entire task is inexplicable and impossible without him" (pp. 123-4).

It may be thought that Stacey's picture of church boredom and decline is somewhat overdrawn. But, be that as it may, he has presented a perceptive analysis of the challenge which confronts the Christian preacher today, and has suggested basic guidelines for a worthy and effective response to it.

NORMAN V. HOPE

*History of the Idea of Progress*, by Robert Nisbet. Basic Books, New York, NY, 1980. Pp. 370. \$16.95.

In this book Robert Nisbet, historian and sociologist, presents what he calls "a short history of the idea of progress," by identifying and putting in proper perspective "the major personages, texts, presuppositions, intellectual climates, and philosophical and ideological uses of the idea during the past twenty-five hundred years" (p. ix). Part I of the book describes "The Genesis and Development of the Idea of Progress." It begins with Greek and Roman antiquity, proceeds through early and medieval Christianity, to what the author calls "the great renewal" of the idea during the post-Renaissance period, 1560-1740. Part II, entitled "The Triumph of the Idea of Progress," carries the story from the middle of the eighteenth century down to the present day. It does this along two lines. First it deals with those exponents of the idea who emphasize individual freedom—men like Adam Smith, the Founding Fathers of the American Republic, and Immanuel Kant. Then Nisbet describes those who interpreted progress in terms of collective power—such as G.W.F. Hegel, Auguste Comte, and Karl Marx. A final chapter, entitled "Progress at Bay," discusses the status of the idea at the present day.

In carrying out his massive survey Nisbet takes sharp issue with some of the view-



points expounded by the eminent British historian John B. Bury in his well-known classic, *The Idea of Progress*, published in 1920. For example, whereas Bury could find no conception of progress in classical antiquity or in Christian thought to the end of the Middle Ages, Nisbet argues persuasively—with due documentation—that the idea was alive and well in ancient Greece, at least from the days of Hesiod and Aeschylus, and in the Roman world in men like Lucretius and even Seneca. It was also present in ancient and medieval Christianity, he contends, in the writings of such authors as Augustine in the early period and Joachim of Fiore in the medieval. Again, Bury, a rationalist and freethinker, believed that the Christian belief in Providence effectively ruled out any idea of progress, and therefore had to be discarded before progressive ideas could take root—something which did not happen, he maintained, until the late seventeenth century. But Nisbet, on the contrary, asserts that “if there is one generalization that can be made confidently about the history of the idea of progress, it is that throughout its history the idea has been closely linked with, has depended upon, religion or upon intellectual constructs derived from religion” (p. 352).

Nisbet also disputes those writers who have maintained that the idea of progress declined measurably towards the beginning of the twentieth century, or at any rate soon after the close of World War I. He is well aware, of course, of the work of postwar critics of the idea such as W. R. Inge in England and Oswald Spengler in Germany. But he asserts that the idea of progress persisted strongly down to the middle of the twentieth century, citing as proof men like the economic individualist F. A. Hayek, liberal educationists like John Dewey, and the Marxist-oriented scientists J. D. Bernal and Joseph Needham.

Nisbet does admit, however, that “though the dogma of progress held magisterial status during most of its Western history, it has obviously fallen to a low and sorely beset status in our [latter half of the twentieth] century” (p. ix). As evidence of this he cites such contemporary developments as “the disowning of the past”; the decline in world power and influence of the West, i.e., the European-American community, in which

the idea of progress took shape and flourished; and “the degradation of knowledge,” by which he means that today “the scholar and the scientist and their works do not enjoy anything like the respect—even self-respect—once a staple of Western civilization” (p. 341).

What of the future of the idea? This question is important, says Nisbet, because “if the idea of progress does die in the West, so will a great deal else that we have long cherished in this civilization” (p. ix). He argues that this idea is bound to remain moribund, indeed is likely to “go all the way over the brink,” so long as, in Yeats’ well-known words, “mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,” as he believes it is at present. But he sees some ground for guarded optimism in the present decline of interest in politics and the signs of an apparent revival of religious concern, for “only in the context of a true culture in which the core is a deep and wide sense of the sacred are we likely to regain the vital conditions of progress itself and of faith in progress—past, present, and future” (p. 357).

This is a work of wide and varied learning, in which judgments are clearly expressed and forcibly argued. It constitutes a major contribution to the discussion of a fascinating subject.

NORMAN V. HOPE

*John R. Mott, 1865-1955: A Biography*, by C. Howard Hopkins. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1980. Pp. 816. \$22.50.

It has been said of John R. Mott that “more than any other man, he *was* the international ecumenical movement in the formative period from 1910 to 1948.” In this statement there is a considerable measure of truth, as a survey of Mott’s public career will show.

He was born in Sullivan County, New York State in 1865. But when he was four months old his parents moved to Postville, Iowa, where he was brought up as a Methodist. In 1879 he underwent a conversion experience; and in 1886, while an undergraduate at Cornell University, he dedicated his life to full-time Christian service in response to a challenge from J.E.K. Studd, a Cambridge University graduate who was tour-

ing American universities with the object of recruiting students for the Christian missionary enterprise. After graduation, in 1888 Mott obtained his first salaried appointment as associate Intercollegiate Secretary of the Student YMCA, and two years later he was promoted to senior Secretary. In 1915, after several refusals, he accepted the General Secretaryship of the YMCA, USA, a position from which he retired in 1928. Thus the YMCA, of which Mott was a salaried official for forty years, was the base from which he launched his many endeavors on behalf of the Christian church and its upbuilding throughout the world.

Mott made an outstanding contribution to the ecumenical movement in both of its aspects—i.e., in its missionary outreach across the globe and in its quest for church unity both in spirit and in outward organization. In 1888 he became chairman of the Student Volunteer Movement, which under its motto, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation," eventually sent about twenty thousand dedicated and well-equipped students into Christian service on the foreign missionary field; and this position he retained until 1920. In 1895 he became one of the co-founders of the World's Student Christian Federation, which united the students of over three thousand colleges and universities. Of this movement Mott was General Secretary till 1920, and Chairman from 1920 to 1928. Along with his close friend Joseph H. Oldham, "the diminutive Scot," Mott planned the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, a gathering which has been described by R. Pierce Beaver as "the fountainhead of the modern ecumenical movement." Mott became chairman, and Oldham secretary, of the Continuation Committee which the Edinburgh Conference appointed; and in 1921 these two engineered the formation of the International Missionary Council, of which Mott was chairman for the next twenty years. Throughout his tenure of this office, Mott sought to make the International Missionary Council what William Paton, one of its later secretaries, described as "the watchtower of the church and the thinking brain of the missionary adventure"; and in his official capacity he presided over the important conferences which the IMC sponsored at

Jerusalem in 1928 and at Tambaram, Madras in 1938.

Mott also played a formative role in the formation of the World Council of Churches, which represented a merger of the two movements of Faith and Order and Life and Work. The principal architect of the Faith and Order movement was Mott's friend Bishop Charles H. Brent, who received the inspiration to inaugurate the Faith and Order movement while he was a delegate to the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. Mott attended the preparatory commission of Faith and Order in 1916; and he was a delegate to the first full-scale conference of the movement at Lausanne in 1927, but had to leave early on account of sickness. At the next Faith and Order conference, held at Edinburgh in 1937, Mott shared the general chairmanship with the other leaders William Temple, Alfred E. Garvie and Marc Boegner. The founder of the Life and Work movement was Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala from 1914 to 1931, whom Mott had known since 1890. Though Mott was not present at the first Life and Work conference at Stockholm in 1925, at the next conference, on Church, Community and State at Oxford in 1937, he was chairman of the Business Committee and played a prominent part in the proceedings. When the two 1937 conferences, at Oxford and Edinburgh, voted to merge their forces to form what Samuel Cavert called a "World Council of Churches," Mott was nominated to be vice-chairman of the committee which was set up to implement the merger. The World Council remained actively "in process of formation" throughout World War II; and when it was finally established at Amsterdam in 1948, Mott was named Honorary President, a position which he occupied until his death in 1955. This was a fitting recognition of the key role which he had played in the formation of the Council.

These activities of Mott—as YMCA Secretary and as ecumenical statesman—involved him in virtually incessant travel, not merely within the USA but throughout the world: compared with him the Apostle Paul might seem to be a stay-at-home. Such activities might have absorbed all of even Mott's abundant energy; but in fact he found, or made, time for other important projects as well. At

the request of his friend President Woodrow Wilson, Mott participated in two United States government missions—one in 1916 to Mexico to obtain “a settlement with our neighbor”; and the other in 1917 to Russia to welcome the Provisional Government which followed the Czar’s overthrow and to confer with its representatives on how the US could best cooperate with it in the prosecution of World War I which was then in progress. Again, in 1918 Mott was chairman of the World War Work campaign which raised \$200 million for ministry to recruits in training, soldiers at the front, and prisoners of war.

Not surprisingly, in recognition of Mott’s manifold and fruitful labors, he received many public honors: honorary doctorates from universities, the Distinguished Service Medal from the US government, and nomination as Chevalier of the Legion of Honor from the French government. In 1946 he shared the Nobel Peace Prize.

The life of this remarkable, indeed unique, man has been written by Dr. C. Howard Hopkins, well known to students of American religious history as the author of *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism* and his *History of the YMCA*. He has devoted fifteen years to the composition of this monumental work. Like the good biographer he is, he sets Mott within the context of the times in which he lived. But within that context Mott comes vividly alive, as a man of outstanding organizing and administrative capacity, with what K. S. Latourette called “a genius for discovering and enlisting ability,” of tireless diligence, and above all of deep dedication to the advancement of the cause of Jesus Christ throughout the world. The keynote of this book might well be found in the statement which Mott made in 1933 and repeated in 1954: “While life lasts, I am an evangelist.”

Several books have been written about J. R. Mott—for example, Basil Mathews, *John R. Mott, World Citizen* (1934) and Robert Mackie and others, *Layman Extraordinary: John R. Mott, 1865-1955* (1965). But Dr. Hopkins’ volume will undoubtedly take rank as the standard and authoritative account of Mott’s life and work.

*Into All the World: A Biography of Max Warren*, by F. W. Dillistone. Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1980. Pp. 251. £8.25.

Max Warren was one of the most influential Anglican missionary statesmen of the twentieth century. In 1974 he published an autobiography entitled *Crowded Canvas*. This interesting book was criticized by some of its readers on the ground that, in saying so much about Warren’s friends, it told all too little about Warren himself. Those readers will now be happy about the appearance of Warren’s official life story, written by his friend, the well-known biographer F. W. Dillistone.

Warren (1904-1977), born into an Irish missionary family, decided early in life to offer himself for Christian service in the foreign field. After graduating with high honors from Cambridge University, he was ordained as a Church of England clergyman and in 1927 went out to Nigeria under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society. In less than a year, however, he was invalided home. After a lengthy recuperation, in 1936 he became vicar of the influential Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge. In 1942 he entered upon the chief work of his life as General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, the largest missionary society in Great Britain; and in this position he rendered distinguished service for 21 memorable years. Resigning in 1963, he became a Canon of Westminster, and retired ten years later, but continued working fruitfully almost till his death.

Warren made several significant contributions to the Christian missionary movement. First, by his speeches and writings—for example, his C.M.S. Newsletter and his books like *I Believe in the Great Commission*—he kept prominently before the Church of England the obligation to take the Christian gospel to the whole world. Again, he sought to think out the most fruitful Christian approach to the adherents of other religions, in view of the post-World War II change from colonial subjection to political independence in much of the Third World, and also in view of the resurgence of such ethnic religions as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Convinced as he was of the uniqueness



and finality of Jesus Christ, Warren yet believed that through non-Christian religious systems something of God's saving activity had been disclosed. He therefore argued for dialogue rather than dogmatic preaching as the proper Christian stance in relation to non-Christians. Once more, Warren played an active role in the International Missionary Council, which was founded in 1921 by John R. Mott and Joseph H. Oldham as "the watchtower of the church and the thinking brain of the missionary adventure"; and his influence was strongly felt at the conferences which the Council sponsored at Whitby, Canada in 1947 and at Willingen, Germany in 1952. But he opposed the merger of the I.M.C. with the World Council of Churches, which was consummated at New Delhi in 1961, on the ground that such a merger would not deepen missionary interest and commitment. All in all, if Warren was not—as a Canadian dean described him in 1963—"the greatest Anglican in the Anglican world today," he surely deserves to be called, in his biographer's words, "the leading light in the Church of England's missionary outreach in the mid-twentieth century."

These activities and other enterprises in which Warren was engaged are admirably described in this well-written book. But Dr. Dillistone also presents—and this is surely one of the major functions of a biography—a lively portrait of Warren the man: his intellectual ability, his omnivorous reading, his zest for travel, his happy home life, his genius for friendship, and above all his deep and lifelong commitment to the spread of the Christian gospel throughout the world. This is a volume which all who are interested in the Christian world mission will find not only interesting but profitable and enriching.

NORMAN V. HOPE

*Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, by R. T. Kendall. (Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 1979.) Pp. 238. \$12.50.

B. B. Warfield's claim that there is nothing in the Westminster Confession "which is not to be found expressly set forth in the writings of John Calvin" is refuted in this scholarly monograph on English Calvinism. Author R. T. Kendall traces the concept of

saving faith from Calvin to William Perkins to the Westminster Assembly in order to determine in what sense Westminster theology may be regarded as the theological legacy of Calvin. He boldly asserts what some have suspected: Calvin's thought, with the exception of the decrees of predestination, is hardly to be found in Westminster theology.

Calvin understood faith, according to the author, to be given, intellectual, passive and assuring; he therefore did not urge people to reassure themselves of their calling and election. Rather, the Reformer declared, Christ's death for all was a sufficient pledge of God's love. These aspects of Calvin's faith are contrasted with what Kendall regards as the experimental predestinarian tradition begun by Theodore Beza, popularized by William Perkins and brought to its logical conclusion by William Ames. He sees this tradition as being rooted in Beza's notion that Christ died only for the elect, thus shifting the grounds for assurance from Christ to sanctification or good works. Perkins is portrayed as believing that Beza's view was essentially that of Calvin and as propagating the idea that people can and must make their election sure to themselves. Perkins identified this method as the "practical syllogism," a keynote for Kendall in the experimental predestinarian tradition. In this syllogism the conscience evaluates the acts of a person which are brought to mind through the operation of the memory. Justifying faith therefore was that "whereby a man is persuaded in his conscience."

Kendall reviews the work of a number of divines who followed Perkins and who gradually moved towards an explicit voluntarism in their understanding of saving faith. He considers the work of William Ames as giving weightiest sanction to the shift away from Calvin. The work of Perkins is characterized as new wine in old wine-skins; the work of Ames is said to be the new wine-skins, dispensing as it does with "temporary faith" and advocating that one can earn God's grace by consecration to a godly life.

The argument in *Calvin and English Calvinism* is punctuated by the crosscurrents of Antinomianism and Arminianism. Especially significant in this regard is Kendall's assertion that a great similarity between



Arminius and the experimental predestinarians may be observed on the nature of saving faith. The book concludes with a description of Westminster theology as "predestinarian, voluntaristic and experimental." While deviating at specific points from the spectrum of experimental predestinarians, the Westminster Divines are viewed as carrying on the tradition of Beza and Perkins, and as neglecting the work of Calvin. For Kendall, this is most obvious in the conscious separation of faith and assurance in the Westminster documents.

This is not a book for the general reader, assuming as it does a previous understanding of reformed theology and a willingness to persevere through a doctrinal maze. The scholarly apparatus is convincing, the research prodigious and the biographical sketches informative. Limitations are inevitable in even the focused survey, and one hopes that Kendall's challenge to place John Bunyan and Jonathan Edwards within the shifting patterns of Calvinism is taken seriously. This investigation would be especially helpful for students and teachers alike who must hold Calvin, Bunyan and Edwards together in surveys of historical theology. The work of Scottish divines, apart from that of Samuel Rutherford, is avoided, leaving open the question of how accurately Calvin's work was represented north of the English border. Kendall's book however provides not only a compendium of the thinking of the English Calvinists, but a provocative thesis which should be considered carefully in future scholarship.

BARBARA J. MACHAFFIE

Cleveland State University

*Law and Society in Puritan Massachusetts: Essex County, 1629-1692*, by David Thomas Konig. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1979. Pp. xxi + 215. \$21.00.

Historians of New England have long been concerned with issues of power and authority, church and magistrate, as they pertain to social and spiritual order in the developing communities of the seventeenth century. This important book, published in the "Studies in Legal History" series, pre-

sents the case of Essex County from the granting of the colony's first charter in 1629 to the receipt of the second in 1692. Through detailed research and reconstruction of the thousands of court cases heard in Essex during these years, Konig combines a technical study of law and procedure in comparison with its English antecedents, with a sociological/anthropological interpretation to describe a more general process of change affecting all of New England.

The thesis of the book is that the flurry of litigation, beginning especially in the 1650s and intensifying in the 1670s and 80s, gradually replaced the communalism of gathered church and town meeting as the primary basis of social order and stability. Migration to Massachusetts had naturally increased social problems and tensions surrounding competing value systems and private goals. The fluid mobility of New Englanders to new settlements put many individuals beyond the usual forms of community supervision and discipline. Consequently government was forced to decentralize and vest authority in subordinate bodies capable of handling the numerous intramural town disputes, especially those concerning property and individual claims.

Konig's argument is rightly set in the context of the Puritan ideal of creating communal structures and relying upon the coercive instruments of magistracy to insure social harmony, a recognition of Michael Dalton's pragmatic statement in 1619 that most commonly peace "is rather a restraining of hands, than an uniting of minds" (p. 18). The gradual transition from communalism to litigation occurred in large part because the church was losing both its authority to regulate personal and communal behavior, and its ability to sustain the ideal of unanimity in decision-making. The earlier stress on neighborly watchfulness and admonition was now interpreted as "meddling," and arbitration became the means whereby saint and sinner could best live side by side. Moreover, the courts provided ways by which an offender could re-enter the normal routine of society, a process which had proved much more difficult in a covenanted, gathered community. Thus, litigation became more than a final bastion against chaos; it was often a constructive agent of social change and economic growth

utilized by individuals as well as lawyers and judges. König's novel interpretation of the Salem witchcraft trials emphasizes the importance of this fact. It is anticipated that scholars will follow the lead of König's fine study and tell us more about legal theory and praxis in other New England communities.

PHILIP J. ANDERSON

North Park Theological Seminary  
Chicago, IL

*The German Churches under Hitler: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue*, by Ernst Christian Helmreich. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, MI, 1979. Pp. 616. \$30.00.

The study of the churches under the Nazi regime has become a veritable industry in German scholarship. Already in 1958 Otto Diehn listed 5,566 items (*Bibliographie zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes 1933-45*, Vol. 1 of *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes*, Göttingen, 1958), and each year since has seen a score of monographs and a spate of articles, as well as the publication of numerous governmental and Nazi Party records. Helmreich's work is the latest attempt to digest this mass of material and present it in English.

Helmreich argues that the churches under National Socialism deserve careful study because they were "the only institutions which did not succumb to Hitler's policy of regimentation" (p. 11). To investigate the reasons for this, he begins his book with an extensive and extremely valuable summary of church-state relations from the Reformation through the Weimar Republic. The bulk of the book is concerned with the church struggle itself, concentrating on the period between 1933, when Hitler came to power, and 1939, when the war forced the attention of Germany's leaders to foreign affairs. Helmreich surveys the wartime restrictions on the churches denomination by denomination, and ends with an analysis of the situation of the churches in postwar Germany. Thus, although the focus of the work is indeed on the churches in Nazi Germany, it also provides a history of church-state rela-

tions in Germany from Luther to the present day.

It is apparent from Helmreich's work that the "struggle" was rather limited. It was the primary aim of the churches in Germany, both Catholic and Protestant, to preserve their freedom to teach, preach, and conduct their sacramental life without State interference—and without losing the financial support of the State. A challenge to Nazi ideology, as in the Barmen Declaration, was rare, and to the Nazi racial policies was rarer still. For the most part, the churches' concern only extended as far as their own Jewish converts, and not to Jews as such. On the other side, the government was willing to allow the churches some degree of internal freedom and financial support to avoid domestic unrest and foreign criticism. Had the churches mounted a more direct attack on Nazism as such, there is no doubt that the persecution would have been much more severe. The treatment of the Catholic Church in Poland provides some indication of the virulence of unrestrained Nazi policy: By 1941, for example, over two-thirds of the 828 regular and secular clergy in the archdiocese of Posen had either been killed or placed in concentration camps, and only 51 were being allowed to carry out regular pastoral duties (p. 357).

If the churches in Germany managed to avoid becoming mere instruments of the State, they did little more than that. In Helmreich's own words, "It is apparent to all that the churches were slow to move, were beset by differences both among the leaders and among the ranks, and cannot be said to have won any glorious battles against Nazi activities and Weltanschauung" (p. 463). The German churches themselves echoed this judgment. Meeting at Stuttgart in October, 1945, a group of Protestant church leaders issued a statement which contained the following: "... we charge ourselves for not having borne testimony with greater courage, prayed more conscientiously, believed more joyously, and loved more ardently" (quoted, p. 421). Had they done so, they would have suffered more grievously. But perhaps, under such circumstances, that was their duty.

Helmreich's work must be regarded as a complement to, and not a replacement for, J. S. Conway's *The Nazi Persecution of the*

*Churches* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968). The strength of Helmreich's book is his attention to the history of church and state in Germany, and his coverage of all the various denominations and sects in Germany. Conway, while restricting his focus mainly to the established Protestant churches and the Roman Catholics, provides a more coherent rendering of the principal events and personalities. In addition, Conway does not assume a great knowledge of the history of Nazi Germany *per se*, as Helmreich tends to do. Finally, Conway is more sensitive to the theological issues involved in the history of the period than Helmreich. Nevertheless, *The German Churches under Hitler* is an admirable book in its overall conception, the depth of its research, and the balance of its judgments. If the failure of the German churches to provide a clear Christian witness in the face of Nazism is lamentable, it can only be said that other churches in other places have also failed to provide such a witness, and that every church everywhere can apply the judgment at Stuttgart to itself in its own life. Helmreich's work will have served a noble purpose if the churches can learn from it what they themselves might be called to face.

DAVID W. JOHNSON

Graduate School  
Princeton Theological Seminary

*'A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven': Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts*, by W.K.B. Stower. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, CT, 1978. Pp. 251. \$20.00.

Just over a decade after the first Puritan migration to Massachusetts, the infant colony was traumatized and almost shattered by the Antinomian Controversy. Anne Hutchinson was charged with Antinomianism as a rebuttal to her charging most ministers with preaching a covenant of good works.

The importance of this well-founded independent study of the famous controversy is its originality. Its author, Chairman of the Department of Liberal Studies in the Western Washington University, not only correlates the Puritan theology of New Eng-

land with that of Old England, but places it in an even wider context of Calvinist religious thought.

This work revises interpretations of the principals, including John Cotton and Thomas Shepard, and shows the general balance in Puritan theology of Divine grace and human responsibility. It is, in fact, a reconsideration in depth of the nature and functions of covenantal theology. For all these reasons this scholarly book deserves wide and reflective reading.

HORTON M. DAVIES

*A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction*, by Urban T. Holmes. Seabury Press, New York, NY, 1980. Pp. 166. \$10.95.

Dean Urban Holmes of the School of Theology of the South proposes in this brief volume to analyze all the schools of spirituality from Abelard to Zwingli, ancient medieval and modern, Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant. It is an introduction which hardly allows time for a handshake, let alone a conversation. It might better have been termed "A Concise Encyclopedia of Spirituality," since it can hardly be described as a narrative history of spirituality. But the little we learn about many persons is certainly enticing.

It is unfortunate that Dean Holmes was not allowed greater space since he has the spiritual depth, psychological insight, humanity and humor to give us an extensive and intensive history of spirituality. Even so, he selects the contemporary experts in spirituality with great catholicity, including a miniature of Simone Weil, Dag Hammarskjöld, Thomas Merton and Martin Luther King.

HORTON M. DAVIES

*Liturgies of the Western Church* (Selected and with Introduction), by Bard Thompson Fortress Press, Phila., PA, 1980. Pp. 434. \$7.95 (paper).

This is an important collection of the Sunday Services and Communion Orders produced in the history of Western Christianity



and should be in every minister's library. In fact, since it is now in its ninth printing it is obviously widely appreciated.

Each liturgy is sensitively introduced, translated (when necessary) and edited, with bibliographical suggestions, by Professor Thompson, who is Dean of the Graduate School of Drew University and a distinguished scholar of Reformation worship and theology.

Nowhere else can we so conveniently find the First Apology of Justin Martyr, the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, the Low Mass of the Roman Rite, Luther's two Reformed Rites, Zwingli's Zurich Liturgy, Bucer's Strassburg Liturgy, Calvin's Liturgies of Strassburg and Geneva compared, the Book of Common Prayer Rites of 1549 and 1552, John Knox's Liturgy, The Puritan Middleburg Liturgy, The Westminster Directory, Baxter's Savoy Liturgy, and John Wesley's Sunday Service.

Here are the basic texts for any study of Comparative Liturgics illuminatingly introduced and discussed. Itself the book is a liturgical education, and most of all for those who, in the Puritan and Pietist traditions of worship, value so-called "free" prayers, and are unaware of their ancestry. Here they may learn how far they have travelled from Protestant origins.

HORTON M. DAVIES

*The Church: Its Changing Image through Twenty Centuries*, by Eric C. Jay. John Knox Press, Atlanta, GA, 1980. Pp. 472. \$9.95 (paper).

This book by the professor emeritus of theology at McGill University, Montreal, is a careful, thorough and comprehensive treatise on the varied conceptions of the nature and functions of the Christian Church throughout history. It covers Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant ecclesiologies. It is solidly based on the original documents of the Church of the New Testament, of the Fathers, of the Middle Ages, of the Reformation, and of the 18th and 19th centuries.

It also has a valuable hundred pages on the ecclesiological thought of Barth, Tillich, and Küng. Originally appearing two years ago in England in two volumes, it offers a

generous 472 pages in paperback for \$9.95, while the clothbound edition costs \$18.00. Prepared for Seminars for graduate students in theology, it is a seminar in itself to read it because of its clarity, ecumenical spirit, and sound scholarship.

HORTON M. DAVIES

*New Ministries: The Global Context*, by William R. Burrows. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1980. Pp. 178. \$7.95.

Since Maryknoll (the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America) recruits and trains people for overseas missionary service, it is important in the changed climate of missions (with younger churches attaining maturity and freedom, the revival of religions other than Christianity, the technocratic evolution we are undergoing, the concern for social justice, and the shrinking of material resources in the global village) that the imperatives to mission and the strategies and tactics be overhauled.

This is exactly what William Burrows, a Divine Word priest who has taught indigenous seminarians in Papua, sets out to do. He insists on new forms of the church organization and ministry to be relevant in the changed context. His flexible and innovative approach is matched with an attractive modesty about his suggestions, many of which seem highly original. This wise man is spending his furlough studying the non-Christian religions, and he deserves to be heard by Catholic and Protestant missionaries alike.

HORTON M. DAVIES

*A New History of the Organ*, by Peter Williams. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 1980. Pp. 233. \$27.50.

When clergy, musicians and organ committees are faced with the prospect of rebuilding, replacing or repositioning an organ in an older building, or designing a new instrument for a new building there have been few books in English which could provide for them a comprehensive history of the instrument. Most books about organs are



technical studies of instruments from specific historical periods or in limited national or geographic areas.

At last we have a detailed history of the organ in one moderate sized book, written by one of the finest scholars whose special interest is the organ and other historic keyboard instruments. This book will give committees a thorough, but not overly technical, view of the organ from medieval times to the present day, presented in an organized, concise and readable style.

Many historical gaps in the history of the organ have been closed during the past decade—thanks to scholars such as this book's author, Peter Williams, and a better understanding as to how the organ has been used in the Church during the past six or seven centuries is reflected—often for the first time—in this book.

Some of the most informative sections of the book are the chapters on the early church organ through the fifteenth century. The liturgical use of the instrument as a sort of "mechanical choir" during its early use in the Church is clearly and convincingly discussed in these chapters.

Williams' particular interest in organs from the 16th through the 18th centuries has not negatively influenced his thorough and fair discussion of 19th-century developments—a period of a slow but steady artistic decline in the history of organ design. He has provided an objective and complete discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the instruments from this period—a time when the organ traded its vocal-choral past with the "one man orchestra" approach to organ design.

It is difficult to write an objective history of one's own time, but Williams' treatment of the important 20th-century organ revival developments is a model of clarity and understanding. These chapters, especially, should be carefully studied by organists, clergy and organ/music and worship committees.

Williams is a thorough historian, but no prophet. His final chapter on the present and immediate future of the organ is short and incomplete, and his understanding of the use of the organ in American churches is limited. One would have wished for a discussion on the influence of liturgical reform, as well as the current use of other

instruments in worship, as related to the future of the organ as an instrument for the contemporary and future church. It is hoped that more frequent visits to America will help him seriously evaluate the role of the organ in the diverse musical practices found in American churches, and we look forward to future articles from this scholar on this subject.

The book includes a complete Glossary of terms related to the instrument (required reading for organ committees) and a section of beautifully reproduced plates of organ cases from the 14th through the late 20th centuries. Whenever churches undertake the difficult task of rebuilding or replacing an organ, it is hoped that all responsible for such major decisions will carefully study this important book—a first of its kind.

JAMES LITTON

*The Music of the English Parish Church* (Vols. I & II), by Nicholas Temperley. (Cambridge Studies in Music. General Editors: John Stevens and Peter le Huray.) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England, 1980. Pp. Vol. 1, 447, Vol. 2, 213. (Price not listed.)

Even though there are numerous books, both scholarly and popular, concerning the role of music in English cathedrals since the English Reformation, Nicholas Temperley's thorough study is the first major investigation into the varied and fascinating musical life of English parish churches. Since English musical practices have strongly influenced the development of American church music, this book sorts out many historic strands which can now be woven together. The book provides full information resulting in a complete understanding of the development of congregational and choral music in English and American churches of all denominations from the 18th century to the present day.

The unjustly neglected parish church compositions of the 18th and early 19th centuries were a direct influence on such early American composers as William Billings. What had seemed to be a unique, but typical, 18th-century American type of church

music can now be traced to the 18th-century English parish church anthem repertoire. This is made very obvious when glancing through musical examples from this period which Temperley has included in Volume 2 of the study.

The book begins with an investigation into the significance of music in an English parish church, and this is followed by a thorough analysis and study of all historical periods from before the mid-sixteenth-century English Reformation to the present day. We find that the popular psalm tunes of the last half of the sixteenth century—inspired by French Calvinist metrical psalm singing, but influenced by the ballad—were sung, originally, in a lively style and fast tempo. By the eighteenth century metrical psalm singing had slowed down to the point that the tunes were nearly unrecognizable. Other current studies of metrical psalm singing in eighteenth-century Holland, for instance, have discovered a parallel development across the North Sea in the Calvinist Lowlands. A late twentieth-century survival of slow psalm singing, led and lined out by a parish clerk, can be heard in remote areas of Scotland, especially in the Orkney and Shetland Islands. Present day North American survivals of this type of congregational singing can be experienced in rural areas in the South and in certain conservative urban and rural Black congregations. A leader or the minister sings (lines out) each note of the tune, followed by a "gathering" of the congregation singing the pitch after the leader, often with a breath taken after each note of the tune.

Temperley has shown that many parish churches which had a complete musical establishment before the Reformation usually had no music at all in their services for many decades, and even centuries following the Reformation. When music was reintroduced in parish church worship it was normally in the form of metrical psalms, sung before and after sermons, and at later date, before and after services. Hymnody was introduced in some places as early as the late sixteenth century in the form of communion hymns sung during the communion of the people or immediately after the receiving of communion.

Following the Restoration, in the late

seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century, music once again became a normal part of worship in many parish churches. This led to the development of parish gallery choirs and "bands," as well as an extensive and unique repertoire of psalm and hymn tunes, "fuguing tunes" and parish choir anthems. With the gradual population growth in towns and cities, and the increased influence of the developing "middle class," the rural and urban parish churches began to reflect distinctive differences in liturgical and musical practices. Temperley has traced the extensive and often complex musical practices in town parishes, and contrasts this with slower and somewhat different musical traditions in the more conservative rural parishes. This was a time when the more affluent town and city parishes installed organs, even though they were relatively small instruments when compared to cathedral organs. It was also the period when choirs of "charity children" became a normal part of the life of larger town churches. These unusual choirs of treble voices inspired a small but interesting repertoire of treble voice anthems with organ accompaniment. Temperley's descriptions of this music should spark our curiosity and cause us to look into this neglected aspect of English choral music.

From the mid-nineteenth century through the present day the "high church" Oxford Movement has had a strong influence on the practice of parish church music—in England and throughout the world. Temperley's treatment of this musically rich period when choirs left galleries and moved into chancels following the "cathedral ideal" is thoroughly covered, often with important new information discovered by the author. The nineteenth century was a period when hymn singing became firmly established as a normal and expected aspect of parish church worship. With the enormously increased repertoire of hymns in use in parish churches throughout the English speaking world came the development of the comprehensive hymnal, so well represented by *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, first published in 1861.

It is always difficult to document and evaluate one's own time. It is in this evaluation of twentieth-century parish church

music practices that the author has departed from his usual thorough investigation. It is hoped that, as this century enters its last decades, someone will respond to the need to record and document the diverse musical practices in English Churches during the quickly changing decades of this century. There have been many influences which Temperley discusses rather unevenly: the major contribution of The Royal School of Church Music; the "speech rhythm" development in Psalm singing; the strong influence of secular music on the music of the Church during recent decades; the "explosion" of hymn writing, as well as many other recent developments.

It is obvious that this is a monumental study. Where there may be weaknesses, they are the result of what may be an impossible task. In order to present a flawless history of such a diverse subject as the practice of music in parish churches throughout the centuries one must be a musicologist, ethnomusicologist, liturgiologist, hymnologist, sociologist, and a church historian. This study is not primarily a musical task. The book is not always completely accurate when it probes into non-musical matters, nor is the author always on firm ground when he analyzes liturgical and hymnological developments and practices.

There is an exhaustive bibliography which will be a valuable resource for all clergy and musicians who are searching for additional information. This should be a strong guide in making future plans for a parish music program based on a solid historical foundation.

JAMES LITTON

*Carlyle Marney: A Pilgrim's Progress*, by John J. Carey. Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 1980. Pp. 156. \$11.95.

Carlyle Marney was a genius and nearly a legend in his own time. In a sense words cannot do him justice. Marney had to be heard, pondered, and digested. Marney had to be experienced!

Now John J. Carey has given us a portrait of this "pilgrim's progress." Carey, Professor of Religion at Florida State University,

has sifted through sermons and lectures and talked with family and friends of Carlyle Marney. He gives, therefore, a glimpse of the contours of the life and thought of this influential "pastor-theologian."

Marney had a distinguished career as Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Austin, Texas (1948-1958) and the Myers Park Baptist Church of Charlotte, North Carolina (1958-1967). In his last years he became a "pastor to pastors" at his Interpreter's House (1967-1978) near Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. His reputation spread widely through his books (now unfortunately only several are in print) and his frequent appearances before conferences of clergy and laypersons.

Marney was considered a "maverick." His thought was so atypical of his fellow Southern (and later American) Baptist colleagues that Carey is led to pose the question, "Marney: What Kind of Baptist?" But supremely Marney was a man of the South. His roots were there; he ministered there; he taught there; and the stereotypes and "myths" he spent his life trying to undo, he experienced firsthand in the culture he nonetheless loved very deeply.

His thought is treated by Carey as it evolved through the years. Themes in Marney's works recur and Carey sees three as most prominent: The Centrality of the Person, the Vision of a Good Society, and a Forward Looking Church. These were fleshed out by Marney's strong stress on the personal love of God and the quest for personal wholeness, his "Christian Humanism." He visualized nothing less than a "New Human Race." He emphasized an ethic of responsibility based on covenants. This led him to speak of an ethic of parsimony—living on the least that will suffice—so that society might ultimately be galvanized by one vision of a "Common Good." Marney hoped church clergy and laity could lead toward this vision. But his extensive counseling led him to realize that those inside the church are "essentially not different from those who are outside". To Marney this was "the crisis of modern Christianity, and it is a dreadful crisis." He saw a modicum of hope where people found a "private church", a "little group in Christ" where they will begin "to be able to trust". The



"new humanity" will take shape when people become "priests to each other" and the vision of universal humanism will break down the old barriers of sacred and secular.

We might wish Carey had provided a bibliography of Marney's published writings.

But otherwise we're grateful for this engaging sketch of one who had a voice like God's—only deeper!

DONALD K. McKIM

Westminster College  
New Wilmington, PA

### PRAYER

Almighty God, Source of all life, Fountain of all wisdom, Author and Finisher of our faith, we thank thee for those who are graduating here this morning, and we praise thee for bringing them to this day of completion and commencement. Send them forth from this place as workers who have no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. Inspire them to continue to be students of thy word, so that they will not only love to learn but also learn to love. Imbue them with zeal for ministry, that they may not just work to live but live to work for thee.

O thou whose power is made perfect in weakness, give to these new shepherds of thy flocks and those who have been and will be set apart for leadership in thy church a clear vision of their high calling, that they may exercise their ministerial authority with wisdom, justice and humility.

May they never become competent professionals who don't  
practice what they preach;  
may they never let their pulpits shield them  
from reality;  
may they never let liturgy become a substitute  
for personal faith;  
may they never let pastoral concerns blind them  
to the needs of their own families.

Let them be aware of the importance of what they do but not charmed by their own importance. Let them take their work seriously but not take themselves too seriously. Let them be confident but not over-confident, righteous but not self-righteous, sensitive but not hypersensitive.

May they be more concerned with doing what is right  
than for proving they are right;  
may they be more zealous for doing justice  
than for justifying what they do;  
may faith for them be more than a creed,  
and hope more than a dream,  
and love more than a word.

O Divine Redeemer, let them never claim thy promises for themselves and forget their responsibility to those around them, near or far, whose faith is smothered by the world's neglect, whose hope is hidden by the pangs of hunger, whose love is lost in their own despair. Make every member of this class a channel and instrument of thy love, that through each one thy Spirit may be at work, redeeming the satanic systems that enslave and dehumanize those whom thou hast created in thine own image.

In a world where human beings have not yet learned to live together in peace help us all to remember



that it is righteousness that exalts a nation  
 not its nuclear stockpile;  
 that it is thy truth which sets us free  
 not the Gross National Product;  
 that it is by our deeds that we prove our discipleship  
 not by our words;  
 that it is our spiritual stature that counts with thee  
 not our social status;  
 for thou, Lord, lookest on the heart not on the outward appearance.

So whatever challenge they face, whatever burden they bear, whatever price they must pay, give to the members of this Graduating Class the strength and courage to be Christ's women and Christ's men in the world today,

speaking to the world but not over it,  
 being in the world but not of it,  
 living for the world but not like it.

To that end, O God, we pray that thou wilt continue to bless this institution which has prepared them for ministry and which they will now represent in ministry. Be with its president, administrators, faculty and staff, students and their families, alumni, trustees, patrons, and all others who are concerned for and contributing to its welfare and advancement. These things we ask, trusting always and only in the strong name of him who calls us into his service, who equips us for every task, and who never tests us beyond our strength when our strength is in him, even Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

(Prayer given at the 1980 Commencement Exercises by the Rev. Richard S. Armstrong, Ashenfelder Professor of Ministry and Evangelism).

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